

URBAN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH THE “PRACTICAL TRUTH UNIVERSITY”:
A CASE STUDY IN THE INTENTIONAL ROLE AND PRACTICE OF *METANOIA*
FOR PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

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Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease. Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.

Jeremiah 29:4-7 NASU

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:18-20 NASU

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:11-16 NASU

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I have attempted to examine the potential of a (Practical Truth University) that would invite learners to undergo a complete '*metanoia*'. *Metanoia*, the procedure for changing the way one thinks, is the hinge upon which transformation occurs for determined followers of Christ. Repent(ance) as it is translated in the New King James Version of the Bible, is the starting line of discipleship. By employing the stages of learning as taught in the hermeneutical circle of social ethics - clarification, conceptualization, and confrontation - the development of this project was greatly facilitated. In the clarification stage, (Introduction and Chapter One), the problem and setting for which the thesis designed to explore, the educational issues that impede learning among Christians are set-forth. In the conceptualization stage, (Chapters Two, Three and Four) the biblical and theological underpinnings which serve to justify this expose are explored. The final section in the hermeneutical circle is confrontation. In the confrontation stage, chapter five, outcomes of the project proposed, analysis and next steps are projected. In this stage, the previous chapters, including the literature review and theological presets, are brought into focus to demonstrate how the problem(s) can be overcome and what methodologies are necessary to achieve this end. The hindrances and challenges to establishing the Practical Truth University (PTU) as an innovative strategy to facilitate *metanoia* within a local church setting is also explained. Leadership development in an urban context is central to this thesis project. Significant points are made to explain the need for contextual urban leadership training, which is inclusive of how and why this is critical.

PART 1: CLARIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THIS THESIS-PROJECT

There is a plethora of books, videos, and radio and television programs along with a rainbow of ministries that dot the landscape of our nation “preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” However, church attendance and biblical literacy among the layperson remains sub par. It can be said that believers, particularly residing in the United States, are more informed, however, true change, repentance (*metanoia*) is yet to be realized on a larger scale. The transformation process as written in the book of Romans is unattainable for most Christians, not because of lack of desire, but lack of focused biblically-based pedagogy. Furthermore, when the Great Commission is considered, believers are woefully ineffective in this practice for the same aforementioned reason(s). One only needs to “quiz” the average believer on any subject of personal relevance to discover they know very little about what the scriptures teach on that matter, and even less about how to apply the Truth to their “real life” situations.

When examining some of the data regarding the practice of faith and personal beliefs among black adults residing in the United States of America there is compelling evidence that supports the need for spiritual intervention that would increase literacy. For instance:

- 20 percent of black adults strongly disagree that Satan is just a symbol of evil but does not exist.
- Barely 30 percent strongly disagree that a good person cannot earn his or her way into heaven through good deeds.

- Only 48% strongly disagree that Jesus committed sins while He was on Earth.
- Just 27% believe that absolute moral truth exists.¹ Although these percentages pertain to the beliefs of blacks, the statistics regarding both whites and Hispanics are even lower categorically.²
- Only one out of every seven adults (15%) placed their faith in God at the top of their priority list.³

The essential aspect of this paper will address the need for and the creation of a system of education, the Practical Truth University, heretofore referred to as PTU, and its role in fostering biblical repentance (*metanoia*) within the local church. Therefore, the goal of the PTU is to provide an environment that systematically and systemically equips people with biblical principles that enable them to live their spiritual life in practical terms or in other words, their everyday life in spiritual terms; the end result of the PTU is a newly formed urban leadership that leads a reformation toward personal and community transformation.

Research Questions

The research questions which will be examined in this paper fall into five categories:

- **Primary Research Question** (Chapter Five): How can a new learning system, designed to introduce biblical repentance (*metanoia*) be fully integrated into an already existing local church?

¹ G. Barna and H. Jackson, *High Impact African-American Churches*, (California: Regal Books, 2004), 73.

² Ibid.

³ George Barna, *Barna Lists 12 Most Significant Finds 2006 Survey*, TheBarnaGroup.org. 2007.

- **Secondary Research Questions:**

1. Genealogy (Chapter One): What are the environmental factors which makes the need for a reformation of thought necessary within a local church, namely the Cathedral of Life of Christian Assembly, heretofore referred to as the Cathedral?
2. Literature Review (Chapter Two): What are the relevant works that address the issues of discipleship, practical theology and Christian education reform?
3. Theology (Chapter Three): What are the theological presuppositions which provide the biblical basis for the establishment of a PTU?
4. Project Design (Chapter Four): In what ways does the Hexagon Technique assist in the development of the PTU and its implementation in a local church, such as the Cathedral?
5. Outcomes, Analysis and Next Steps (Chapter five): How can the PTU influence community transformation through urban leadership development?

Preliminary Definition of Terms

Below are brief descriptions of key terms used in this paper. These terms are presented in greater detail within the body of the project.

- *Metanoia* – a shift of the mind or change; repent; learning, movement of the mind.⁴
- Systems Thinking – the discipline of seeing wholes; ability to see interrelationship and inter-connectiveness between actions, concepts or things.⁵
- Hexagon Process/Technique - a more aggressive form of brainstorming with groups.
- University– a collection of schools and colleges of topics which are examined from a single (*uni*) body of truth, the Old and New Testament. A system of education, rather than a physical place is the emphasis.
- College – signifying a group of schools of thought, such as finance or health, which make up the curriculum of the Practical Truth University system.

⁴ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: the Art and Practice of a Learning Organization*, (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990), 68.

⁵ Ibid., 13.

- Practical Truth University - the name of the education program that embodies the pedagogy and application of biblical truth. It is not to be confused with the traditional meaning; of a physical university setting.

Delimitations

1. The discussion around the Biblical role of education is limited to ‘metanoia’ without specific reference to any particular behavior or activity. No “sin” is identified or targeted, but rather mental models which have been influenced by the god of this world.
2. A local church, in an urban community in an urban setting is addressed in this paper, as opposed to the universal church. Consequently, commentary is restricted to one local assembly, the Cathedral of Life Christian Assembly in Providence, Rhode Island.
3. Leadership development is explored entirely from an urban contextual perspective. The vastness of leadership studies far exceeds the scope of this project.

Assumptions

1. Repentance is the gateway to understanding the Kingdom of God.
2. Discipleship is the chief “business” of the New Testament Church.
3. Urban leadership development requires an urban theological perspective.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING: UNDERSTANDING THE NEED FOR A REFORMED PEDAGOGY OF DISCIPLESHIP WITHIN A LOCAL CHURCH PROVIDENCE RHODE ISLAND

Although theological education in the urban context as defined and focused by Dr. Eldin Villafane speaks primarily of the formal process: Dr. Douglas Hall's comment still has significance in the Sunday school meeting and beyond "Urban training needs to come from interests and long-term needs of the urban people. It should model what it teaches, first of all, by not being just another event that uses the city, but rather is used by the city and its people for their own spiritual and social needs and purposes."⁶ In a very real way the "PTU" could be called, the "University of Discipleship" for it is a place for disciplined learning. The commission given to the Church was to make disciples.

Although the terms disciple or discipleship are not used regularly in today's vernacular, it nevertheless communicates to all who have an ear to hear the seriousness of the call to study. Participation in this "University" could feel like the training of a spiritual military recruit. The nature of this business is eternal, not philosophical. The call is not to study or to learn theory, but the Person and Purpose of Jesus Christ. In the *Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer states, "discipleship means adherence to Christ, and because the Christ is the object of that adherence, it must take the form of discipleship."⁷

This thesis-project proposes a solution to the problem inherit within every institution, namely the gap between what is taught by the institution, in this case the

⁶ Eldin Villafane, *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry*, (Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co.), 1995, 97.

⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, New York, (Macmillan. 1963), 63.

church, and what is practiced by the end-user, the congregant. The problem can be better stated by putting forth various questions that will be addressed in this chapter:

- *What is the spiritual condition of the local church?*
- *Is there a difference between the education of the clergy and of the laity?*
- *What is the role of the Christian Education in the urban community?*
- *What is 'metanoia' and its relevance to community transformation?*

Simply put, for the number of churches, seminaries, Bible schools, Christian television and radio programs, there is an alarmingly low level of biblical literacy and corresponding application of biblical principles in what really matters in life. If you ask the average church-goer, what are the biblical principle(s) associated with health and healing, personal and community economic development, or child-rearing most would not have an answer other than what their experience or others have taught them. The anecdotal evidence to support this statement could easily be found by interviewing and surveying regular attendees of any local church. Clergy, laity and even local church board members are involved in this conspiracy of ignorance. This problem finds its genesis in the separation between the learned and unlearned. Bruce Shelley, in his work, *Church History in Plain Language*, makes this observation; “living religiously in a studious manner was the hallmark of medieval education. Its central aim was eternal salvation. Originally, however learning had been limited primarily to the clergy.”⁸ Many assumptions and presuppositions can be shared at this point, as to why one strata of society received a “proper” education while others did not. Later in the eighth century the need to expand in-depth learning to the “others” was supported by the ruling class, according to Shelly⁹. As part of his master plan to construct what would be called a Christian empire, Charlemagne “widened the opportunities for study through a decree

⁸ Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* (Texas: Word Publishing, 1982), 195.

⁹ Ibid., 196.

that every monastery would have a school to teach all those who with God's help are able to learn."¹⁰ However, these schools were primarily dedicated to the breath of language arts – grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy- later Bible interpretation was included.¹¹ Still, the full integration of biblical principles was neither part of the aforementioned subjects or another class of study, yet it was reserved for those pursuing careers as clergymen. The creation of a school that does incorporate through discipline and practice, the scarlet thread of revelation will provide a much needed bridge between secular and spiritual values, as well as clergy and laity.

The Call for a Focused Pedagogy

The problem being addressed in this thesis is further exacerbated by the lack of “discipleship” focused teaching. For many urban-centered churches, the main objective seems to be numerical growth as defined by an attendance matrix. It seems that the Great Commission is understood and practiced only as a subset to their actual goal of increasing membership. However, it is evident by the continual decline of the “livability” within our cities and the equally dismal influence of our religious institution in society, that our present paradigm of ministry is woefully ineffective. The need to rethink how ministry is conducted is a prerequisite to becoming the Bride of Christ without spot or wrinkle. Harvie Conn's analysis is compelling; he writes, “For us, the challenge now is to retool and design ministry strategies in the image of the un-reached that may be very different from us culturally.”¹² “These are not the only major challenges to conventional mission

¹⁰ Ibid., 196.

¹¹ Ibid., 196.

¹² Harvie M. Conn, *Planting and Growing Urban Churches: From Dream to Reality*, (Michigan: Baker Books, 1997), 92.

theory and practice, but they support the basic thesis. Cities will not yield to simplistic or reductionist evangelistic strategies or to mission-as-usual thinking.”¹³ This change is not simply programmatic, but one that calls for systems and systematic revelation. To develop an informed church or a community of believers who are perpetually learning principles for living a Bible-centered existence is the first step to reaching others with the message of transformation. The people, who are the Church, must first become Disciples of Christ before His mission and mandate can be fulfilled through them.

Today’s brand of Christianity is self-centered. It has been embalmed with the ideology of a “personal Jesus”. The post-modern church has lost sight of the Incarnation which reflects a shortsighted idealism. The idea that Jesus came to earth to save “me”, although true in part, is incomplete and monolithic. The church represents His Body on the earth. Consequently, there is a particular belief system that under girds this thought, and if misunderstood or underestimated will make any attempt to uniformly train the church ineffective. In reality, it is necessary to first understand how a particular group thinks in order to increase their intelligence. The goal of the PTU will be to provide an orderly expression of relevant truth to a group of people. This necessitates, as James O’Tool writes, the getting “Down to the basic premises of their belief system, to root out, in effect, their most fundamental social and ideological assumptions. These assumptions... called collective representations... are the glue that holds a group of people together and binds them in such a way that they can act purposefully.”¹⁴

Education that truly empowers must expose the foundational beliefs of the learner to

¹³ Ibid., 92.

¹⁴ James O’Tool, *Leading Change: The Argument for Values-Based Leadership*, (New York: Ballentine Books, 1996), 169.

himself as a prerequisite to constructing a new “mental edifice” of higher thought that is theologically sound.

This commentary is in no way a reflection on the congregant. The church has trained parishioners to hear sermons. Often, a pastor may think that, “If people would try harder, be more sincere, come to more services, read more, pray more, give more – they, meaning the people, would develop faster spiritually.” Although in some cases this is a valid point, the problem of spiritual illiteracy exists even among the most sincere believer’s. The fact is that people do not ‘do better’ because they literally do not know ‘how to do better.’ More is not the same as better, nor does activity always lead to progress. This is not a defense intended to excuse laziness or spiritual apathy, but rather to present a plausible and quantifiable explanation for the overall condition of the local church and the corresponding effect on the culture. Within the local church, the remedy for bridging the gap between information and application is by instituting a learning system that celebrates the union of theory and practice without bias.

The spiritual health of the local church will significantly increase by developing of a learning community, which systematically grows in the knowledge and application of biblical principles for every day matters and issues of life and community. This learning community called, PTU is the place where the consummation of spirituality and practicality takes place and a more relevant church is born. The local church will increase in its influence within its respective community as it creates and becomes a learning community within a community; one that is based upon the revelation of practical systemic application of biblical truth. The dispenser and catalyst for this revolution is the PTU. It would be naïve to think that just strongly desiring a program for systemic change

will actually result in one. In Peter Senge's work, *The Fifth Discipline*, he painstakingly outlines the necessary elements to bringing positive intentional change to an organization. The context for the development of the PTU is based on the understanding and involvement of the five disciplines he puts forth: System Thinking, Personal Mastery, Mental Models, and Building Shared Vision, and Team Learning.

Disciplines Central to Healthy Team Development

PTU is the epitome of systems thinking. By definition, "systems thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes...seeing interrelationships rather than things...rather than static snapshots."¹⁵ The five disciplines representing systems thinking is captured in the very nature of university education. A university is a collection of multiple schools of thought interconnected in some cohesive fashion. The PTU is engineered to 'connect the dots' between biblical information, life application and community metamorphous.

Personal Mastery is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of the development of patience, and of seeing reality objectively.¹⁶ The idea of personal mastery and the PTU is that of making Bible study intensely personal. Just as a chain is only as strong as it's weakest link, it is the personal growth of the individual believer that strengthens to the whole.

The discipline of Mental Models is necessary in the process of becoming 'doers' of the Word and not just hearers. This discipline is the art of discovering the internal pictures one holds sacred and reviewing them in light of the biblical truth.¹⁷ Through this discipline, participants in the PTU will systematically renew their way(s) of thinking.

¹⁵ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, (New York, New York, Doubleday, 1990), 68-69.

¹⁶ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷ Ibid., 8.

Very close in purpose to the Mental Modeling discipline is the building of a Shared Vision.

Shared Vision is discovering shared pictures of the future that encourages team buy-in and support.¹⁸ The success of the PTU hinges on the collective interrelated efforts of all.¹⁹ It is in the commonality of vision that individual expertise will meet the power of unity. Moreover, it is in group unity which can most profoundly influence our communities. The PTU centers on learning in clusters, which are based upon topical or thematic interests. The idea of learning in this sense is modeled from the more eastern cultural practices. For example, in the Chinese language, learning literally means “study and practice”.²⁰

The discipline of Team Learning also supports this idea strongly. Team Learning is the discipline of thinking together. It is in the practice of this discipline that an organization learns how to grow toward its intended goal together.²¹ In contrast, learning from a western perspective focuses primarily on the acquisition of information as the goal.

The PTU seeks to restore the discipline of study. It differs from a standard Bible class in that its function is the application of truth to specific life issues. Disciples will be more successful in all areas of their lives if they not only know the truth, but also know how to apply the truth they have come to know.

There are four aspects of study that will play a role in each learning cluster: repetition, concentration, comprehension and reflection. It is through the discipline of

¹⁸ Ibid., 12.

¹⁹ Ibid., 9.

²⁰ Ibid., XV.

²¹ Ibid., 10.

study that individuals are “enabled to move in a certain direction” says Richard Foster.²² The direction of choice is wholeness, interconnectivity and biblical centrality. Literacy, biblical literacy; to be more specific, must include a working knowledge of principles beyond the basic knowledge of genealogy, topography and orthodoxy.

Another important contribution that the PTU will make to the local church culture is by erasing the lines between what is traditionally viewed as evangelism and discipleship. Their overlap is crucial to organic growth within the local church. To borrow upon the analogy of a pregnant woman; she does not only think about becoming pregnant, but also the healthy development of the child. The church should approach its evangelism effort in the much the same way. We should not conceive if we do not have the intention and corresponding will to develop those whom God has entrusted to us. Jim Petersen writes, “We often make too much of it (the line between evangelism and discipleship). We say, now that you are a Christian...then we give a shopping list of expectations. We would do far better, and the new believer would do far better, if we would continue to do the things that helped him find Christ in the first place: exploring the scriptures together and talking about what they mean.”²³

As we develop the PTU, and for that matter, any program, we must not lose sight of the mission which is making disciples. A study of history regarding revival in the seventeenth and eighteenth century would reveal the success and failures of mass evangelism. If the result is “souls saved”, rather than mature believers, then revivals in the last 300 years have had a significant measure of success. If, however, success is based on the number of responders who entered discipleship relationships with their Savior

²² Richard Foster, *The Celebration of Discipline*, (New York, New York, HarperCollins 1998), 64-65.

²³ Jim Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*, (Colorado: NavPress Publishing Group, 1993), 20-21.

through the local church, then our success is minimal. Mark Shaw comments on John Wesley's concept of discipleship, "I believe the crisis of the church is one of product, the kind of people being produced." He goes on to say, "What can we do to improve the quality of the product? I propose the solution to be the obedience to Christ's commission to make disciples, to teach Christians to obey everything Christ commanded."²⁴ The true hallmark of growth is measured in spiritual maturity, not in numerical expressions. The PTU seeks to be a cultural stimulant released within the Body of Christ to provide a viable redress to this 2000-year-old problem of declining interest in discipleship. Without remedying this fundamental problem, the army of the Lord will remain an historical footnote in the affairs of urban empowerment and warfare.

Shaw writes,

Perhaps the greatest single weakness of the contemporary Christian Church is that millions of supposed members are not really involved at all and, what is worse, do not think it strange that they are not. As soon as we recognize Christ's intention to make His Church a militant company we understand at once that the conventional arrangement cannot suffice. There is no real chance of victory in a campaign if ninety per cent of the soldiers are untrained and uninvolved, but that is exactly where we stand now.²⁵

John Wesley's' convictions regarding discipleship strongly support and validate the need for an innovative discipleship program.

With all this talk about discipleship, what is the real goal? Is the objective to make disciples, therefore creating a healthier church? On the other hand, is the unspoken objective to create disciplined learners who can apply the learned principles in their lives, and by default create a healthier community? PTU was created to make disciples. In the case of the poor, discipleship making is providing tools for personal empowerment,

²⁴ Mark Shaw, *10 Great Ideas from Church History*, (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1997), 135.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 136.

which enables them to end the suffering associated with lack. Poverty, as it is defined by Linthicum, “Is not so much the absence of goods, but the absence of power- the capability of being able to change one’s situation.”²⁶ In a similar way, the uneducated are given, through biblical discipleship, the information, support and impetus to further their learning which may position them for personal and career advancement. If the church sponsored discipleship culminates only in the acquisition of biblical information then it is marginally useful within the walls of the “church” and not transferable to practical daily activities. The end-result is not discipleship but institutionalism.

The need for an organized means of education, biblically based education is not a recent phenomenon. In Wayne Meeks work, *the First Urban Christians*, he writes, “In a more concrete sense, a school of operation consciously organized by Paul... where one methodically pursued Wisdom or carried theology as wisdom and instruction.”²⁷ Apparently, education was so important to Paul that by default learning communities or “scholastic communities” were established to pursue an “intellectual mission.”²⁸

In a very important contribution authored by George Barna and Harry R. Jackson, Jr., *High Impact African-American Churches*, they express some often-overlooked strengths of what is traditionally referred to as the Black Church or black-led ministries. They write, “By presenting the Bible as a document of practical wisdom rather than one of theological doublespeak, black ministers led their people on a journey designed to distinguish their differences from the dominant culture rather than one bent on

²⁶ Robert Linthicum, *Empowering the Poor: Community Organizing Among the City’s Rag Tag and Bobtail*, (California: Marc Books, 1991), 10.

²⁷ Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1983, p. 83.

²⁸ Ibid., 83.

accommodating it.”²⁹ Education is considered the great equalizer for racial and socioeconomic disparity. The Black church has seemingly always understood this fact and stressed education long before it was legal for a “negro” to learn to read or write. This same philosophy was apparent within the church community and expressed itself still further by adopting “An entirely new perspective on life based upon an understanding of the Kingdom of God.”³⁰

The Black Church in colonial America recognized early that the progress needing to survive would only come through personal and community empowerment. Although, this was and is an ongoing formidable task, the Black Church has historically led this charge. Daniel Payne, the sixth Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the founder of Wilberforce University recognized this need and “developed a strategy to attack black hopelessness and self-doubt.”³¹ His stated objective for founding Wilberforce University was the “integrating faith and practical career training for African-Americans. As the first president of the University, Payne introduced the concept of ensuring that even those who were trained for a secular career would have the benefit of practical theology as the basis of all they did in life.”³² Bishop Payne’s purpose for establishing Wilberforce University mirrors the goals of the PTU. The Bible is the foremost textbook in principle and practice with the end goal of “equipping their members to attain the highest levels of both spiritual and secular success.”³³ As written in the book of Ecclesiastes, “the thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that

²⁹ G. Barna and H. Jackson, *High Impact African-American Churches*, (California: Regal Books, 2004), 69.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 69.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

³² *Ibid.*, 70.

³³ *Ibid.*, 71.

which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.”³⁴

The guiding principle of the PTU is empowerment. It seeks to move “students beyond information and inspiration to life integration.”³⁵ The business of life integration is the heart of the Gospel and of the PTU. Jesus himself rejected the popular Greek model of instruction in favor of a principle-based approach that deliberately connected those principles to real-life issues.³⁶

The salvation of our communities lies in the hands of God’s only ordained agency for salvation, the Church.³⁷ However, often is the case where the decisions as to how to affect the masses of people are the brainchild of a leader or a small band of “appointed” church members. It was believed that the “talented tenth” came up with the solutions for the ills of our society. Moreover, that the hero of the day was a person with “superior” intellect and or charisma. Although, there are many examples of ‘superstar’ ministers who have made profound changes in our culture, how much more effective could their endeavors be if they were developed by and with the collective genius of the end-user? W.E.B. Dubois’ theory was that the middle class, who comprised of about 10% percent of the black community, would be the mastermind. Although the PTU is not designed exclusively for the African-American community, I do subscribe to Kunjufus’ thought that salvation lies...in the hands of the village.³⁸ In other words, it is not the one or the many; but the collective thought process that must address the issues of ignorance. The PTU is also a village. Its design is a by-product of village thinking. Its success squarely

³⁴ Eccl. 1:9.

³⁵ Ibid., 80.

³⁶ Ibid., 80.

³⁷ Eph. 3:10.

³⁸ Jawanza Kunjufu, *Restoring the Village Values, and Commitment: Solutions for the Black Family*, (Illinois: African American Images, 1996), 144.

rests in the lap of the village. The implementation was accomplished through a ‘village’ of teachers across denominational lines, socioeconomic experiences and cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This collaborative, shared-vision based approach is risky, but necessary to authentic community pedagogy.

It is the creation of intimate and dynamic learning clusters designed to teach practical spirituality. The PTU is made up of various colleges of study. Colleges such as Personal Finance, Political Thought and Practice, Personal and Career Development, Family Life, including but not limited to marriage, childrearing and discipline to the more traditional spiritual disciplines of prayer, ministry and Bible study. Essentially, courses are designed to address topics of human concern or interest. These learning communities will meet from four to eight weeks in duration, weeknights, days and or weekends. Part of the process of developing learning clusters will be the actual creation of these classes. The developmental approach of the PTU purposed to teach by principle the importance of community, collective consciousness and collaboration. As new courses are needed, learning clusters will be formed to create and implement them.

Hexagon Technique for Problem Solving

In part, designed using the Hexagon Technique, the PTU will be the chief instrument utilized by the local church to increase the biblical knowledge and application of principles in the life of the average church-goer. The classes were proposed buy the end-user, therefore increasing the likelihood of participation. This project is not an attempt to uncover all the problems experienced within the local church. Its scope is being limited to the subject of Christian education within the church. Boundaries are

important for the development and success of the PTU. A program, well integrated into the life and ongoing function of the local church, will positively affect every other aspect of the church. Its purpose is to systematically influence every dimension of a believer's life and consequently by default affect the corporate Body as well as the larger community.

The Black Church and Education

The Institution of the Christian Church is portrayed in different ways within various segments of society and culture. The Church of England and its influence in the America's cannot be underestimated. However, how the Church was viewed within the various subsets of society differ significantly. Although the purpose of this thesis is not a treatise on the cultural impact of religion, it is necessary to propose plausible explanations to the present educational ethic held within the African-American community, post-slavery, and its corresponding impact on the church. For it can be argued, that the impact of slavery in the United States of America continues to have long reaching implications regarding the perception minorities have toward education as a whole and Christian education more specifically. Although education, within many families was important, survival was more important; thus, leaving the learning process to the powers that be. It is well documented that slave owners and society at-large throughout the first half of the 19th century, discouraged learning among African Americans. Ignorance was a key tool in the suppression of Blacks both enslaved and free. In a spiritual context, literacy and biblical comprehension were the two pillars to freedom of the enslaved African, and the post-slavery African-American. If the slave owner

enforced the law prohibiting slaves from learning to read generations remained enslaved. Blacks were taught from a very young age that there are certain industries and professions for which they would not and could not qualify. Carter G. Woodson, in his classic book, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, writes, “Negros...learned from their oppressors to say to their children that there were certain spheres into which they should not go because they would have no chance therein for development.”³⁹ Although the aforementioned comments refer to the condition of the Americanized African, it also has relevance within the urban context and within the urban church. For it can hardly be argued that our cities and urban churches are populated with the descendents of former subjugated peoples.

Even as literacy increased among Blacks in certain areas of our nation, the “mis-education” continued. Carter states that,

The opponents of freedom and social justice decided to work out a program which would enslave the Negro's mind inasmuch as the freedom of the body and to be conceded. It was well understood that if by the teaching of history the white man could be further assured of his superiority and the Negro could be made to feel that he had always been a failure and that the subjection of his will to some other race is necessary the freedman, then, would still be a slave. If you can control a man's thinking you don't have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do. If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. If you make a man think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told; and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one.⁴⁰

Carter's commentary is a sad essay of the evils of racism. However, it is equally apparent that the strategy of keeping those who you want enslaved ignorant is not a race issue alone. The tactic of disenfranchisement can be seen in domestic relationships or in

³⁹ Carter G. Woodson, *Mis-Education of the Negro*, (New Jersey: African World Press, Inc., 1990), 75.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 84-85.

any social ethos in which human domination is celebrated. This method of enslavement continues today within the sacred space of the Church as well. In the era of pre-civil war in the South, to teach a slave to read anything other than their name was a criminal act.⁴¹ Thus, the scriptures were kept to all but the oppressor, creating a culture of ignorance and indifference. This culture of ignorance and indifference is prevalent throughout much of the African-American church and is propagated unwittingly by leaders who have imbibed the doctrine of spiritual paternalism and have produced children that will be eternally dependent upon the voice which sounds from the pulpit, rather than from their Creator.

The Church is set in the physical and cultural context of the ruling contemporary culture. And as such it reflects all too often the pathology of the day. More specifically, the dismal condition of our public schools and the significant dropout rate, especially within the urban context is mirrored within our Christian education programs. Although this sounds harsh, one only needs to look around and will quickly realize that the problem may be grossly understated. My hypothesis is that as the society goes, so does the church. Our children are not being prepared to compete successfully in this new century, any more than the average churchgoer is able to correctly integrate spiritual and practical truth into their every day life. In both settings, the result is predictable – low performance, disinterests and a return to survival rather than progressive success.

With each passing generation, the church moves further and further away from the premier example of Teaching and Learning as espoused and demonstrated by Jesus Christ. Anthony points out, in *Christian Education, Foundations for the 21st Century*, that

⁴¹ Richard Williams, *They Stole it But You Must Return It*, (New York: HEMA Publishing, 1991), 55.

“Jesus is the master teacher.”⁴² And as the followers of the Master it would behoove us to discover or rediscover the “unique context and instructional methodology of Jesus’ teaching.”⁴³

The challenge faced by the post-modern church is further complicated by the breakdown of the traditional nuclear family. With the economic pressures and the corresponding need for two income producers in the home, the primary duty of teaching both secular and the sacred is delegated to the institution of education and religion. There is very little instruction in the “things of God” taught intentionally in the home. A precious few homes have family prayer, Bible study or even spiritually based discussions. Between the after-school extra-curricular activities of our children, the work schedules of the parents and the easy access of cable and video games – educating is seen as the Churches responsibility.

The Church suffers from the inculcated thought that a few must govern the many. The placement of leaders is firmly supported by the Scriptures, the emphasis, however, was not that only the gifted of God are the keepers of the secrets of God. The intention of God was to put in the hands of the “average” person the truths of Jesus Christ. Due to the professionalization ministry, education and revelation came from the heads of the church down to the congregation. Only enough information was given to make the organization function. Consequently, gross ignorance exists in the congregation, while arrogance flourishes among the clergy. This thought prevails within the traditional church, especially in the urban core. Generally speaking, in the urban centers of our cities, the church member depends greatly on the “feed” from the pastoral leadership. Although

⁴²Michael J. Anthony, *Christian Education, Foundations for the Twenty-first Century*. (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2001), 114.

⁴³ Ibid.

this, in and of itself is natural, normal and to be expected, the recipient doesn't seem to be empowered by leadership to the degree that he or she can teach and train others. The challenge that the church in America faces is rooted in the separation of those gifted and not-so-gifted, educated and the un-educated. In the urban setting, this doctrine has roots in Black church history and within culture. In 1903, W.E.B. Du Bois published an essay entitled "the Talented Tenth" in which he taught that the race of Negroes' will be saved by exceptional men. He believed that an elite few are destined to lead the race to the promise land of opportunity and assimilation. Du Bois wrote, "It has been the educated and intelligent of the Negro people that have led and elevated the mass..."⁴⁴ Although in later writings Du Bois clarified and expanded regarding his thesis on the Talented Tenth. This aristocratic notion nevertheless remained prevalent in the culture of the early 20th century, and remains within the church customs of today. As stated earlier, the majority of church attendees are observers who have been trained to hear sermons, obey them to the best of their ability, but not become skilled practitioners themselves. Empowerment, as discovered in the Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, 'to do the work of the ministry' is missing from the practical mission of the church. Orthodoxy, not orthopraxy is the order of the day, even among those of less traditional denominations.

How to move a generation of seekers of the spiritual things toward doing the Word of God is the basic work and the mission of the PTU. The gift of leadership is needed to motivate the masses to this end. There needs to be a fundamental shift in what is taught and practiced from pulpits and away from didactic teaching that only serves to inform, to a co-op pedagogy that involves practical application of the learned material.

⁴⁴ Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Cornel West, *The Future of the Race*. (New York: Random House, 1996), 134.

This educational paradigm shift is what would eventually be termed a ‘revolution of thought’. True learning shows its maturity through practice of the principle being learned. It may be a talented tenth that would initially instruct, but if the spiritual race of Christians, who were so named at Antioch, is to be the antidote in a culture of nihilism, then it must with all deliberate speed make discipleship the chief priority, as demonstrated by the first-century church.

Roman Catholicism verses American Baptist Approaches to Urban Ministry

Further reflection upon the problem expressed is in the different approaches to ministry which has been demonstrated by denominations, specifically, the Roman Catholics and the American Baptists. How different denominations practice urban ministry, speaks very clearly to the prevailing culture of ministry in the city today.

In reviewing the two different denominational approaches to urban ministry as presented in Clifford J. Green’s work, *Churches, Cities and Human Community* it is evident that to bring out a “*metanoia*” within the urban church culture, working with or within larger denominational structures must be considered. Green presents an urban ministry anthology from 1945 to 1985, which is not too far removed from the present state of affairs within and without the sacred assembly.⁴⁵

The Roman Catholic approach to urban ministry, 1945-85 and the Urban Economic Development Strategies of African-American Baptist groups are interesting because of their historical success. Despite the obvious theological difference between

⁴⁵ Clifford J. Green, *Churches, Cities and Human Community*, (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 179.

Catholicism and Protestantism, their approaches to urban ministry, at least from a Roman Catholic and Baptist tradition have many similarities.

First, both groups see the need for being critically engaged in the fabric of society. From housing development initiatives, political and social action ministries/services, both the Roman Catholic and Baptist denominations worked arduously toward justice for the underserved. One group appears to be interested in proselytizing through social ministry, while the other seems to be more intent on altering how society relates to its group and the larger community.

Second, both groups are fiercely loyal to their particular denominational purity and are not interested in cross pollinating. By tenets of faith, the Roman Catholic Church has its way of “preaching” Christianity. With the exception of the charismatic movement within its ranks later in the period of history under examination, the Roman Catholic tradition did not make room for others on its platform. The Baptist denomination, however, with many variations under its banner, allowed for, and quite frankly, encouraged other believers to participate in the struggle for the soul of the community and institutional change. There were study groups, planning and strategic development teams that included believers and non-believers – Muslims and Jews, particularly.

The writer of this particular essay, Frederick J. Perella, Jr., highlighted that the ultimate goal of Catholicism within the immigrant community was to “multiply parishes in order to provide these ministries (social services) to Catholics”.⁴⁶ This is markedly different from the Baptist models which strategize for the betterment of all without the motivation of expanding the Baptist doctrine or its affiliate congregations.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 180

Third, Roman Catholics and Baptists utilized the power of membership to influence the political environment in favor. Both denominations boast membership in the millions through the forty-eight contiguous states. The strength with which these denominations wielded as a collective group remains impressive. The Baptist groups employed strategies that directly called upon the visible display of numbers. The grass-roots movement, complete with direct action and civil disobedience was a major weapon used to dismantle legislation that trapped the poor and marginalized. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church used its numerical strength to organize groups, such as labor unions to bring about institutional reform. Again, the motivation seemed to be, at least in part, for the propagation of Catholicism or to assist Catholics.

Fourth, both groups have as one of its main tenets the felt needs of the poor. The social ministry of the Roman Catholic Church is undeniable. Well organized and deeply ingrained in the teachings of the church. Feeding, clothing and housing the poor and disenfranchised has long been their cornerstone for centuries. The Baptist denomination, specifically, “black Baptist denomination” have longed cared for their own. The strength of the ministry was based on its willingness and ability to care for those within its community, regardless of religion. The poor from any faith and race for that matter were welcomed at the door of the church.

The histories of these stalwart denominations are inextricably connected to the welfare of the urban community. Their social mission is very similar and in some aspects identical. Their approaches to urban community empowerment differ largely in how to effect change and to what end. The Roman Catholic approach to effect change is through the converting individuals as well communities to the Catholic way by the establishment

of parishes. Thus, increasing the numbers of Catholics living, working and voting in an particular area. The Baptist Church approaches urban revitalization in response to the deplorable conditions of the poor, especially post-slave generations, by economic and political empowerment. Their message was a message to the establishmentarians and to the masses. The promotion of civil rights was not a movement to expand the influence of a particular church, but spreading of a world-view toward justice. One could argue that the motivations of the Baptist model are superior or closer in heart to the Judeo-Christian world-view, therefore more worthy. Both approaches have obvious merit and have borne incontrovertible fruit.

Upon further reflection, especially in light of our studies of effective urban ministries, the merging of the aforementioned models is worth considering. For instance, Catholic Churches are parish or territorially determined. Based upon the demographics, population and ethnic considerations, more or less parishes would be established. In the Baptist model and with other denominations as well, there seems to be less emphasis or consideration of territory. Bigger seems to be the goal. Mega in size, but not necessarily mega in impact. An urban economic strategy as espoused by the Baptist, kneaded into the community through, “parish” development would, in my opinion, yield sustainable and fairly predictable results. The results would be similar to those of the Catholic Church.

The marriage of the Roman Catholic Church and the Baptist denominational strategic approach to urban ministry is the definition of inter-denomination. The strength of each should be applied to current ministry approaches. For cities, especially within the upper Northeast, are densely populated with Catholics or former Catholics. Similarly, the influence of the bygone era of the Church of England and its splinter groups still occupy

the religious landscape. Therefore the timing and necessity of a viable “mutation” is in order. A church movement that respects the catechisms of the episcopos and the inclusions of the protestant church, all the while demonstrating genuine care and concern for the masses would speak to the heart of a generation that “knows not God”. Allowing for the struggle inherent within any developing entity, especially those of a religious nature, this “new” church model would meet both the sacerdotal requirements and the social demands that are the churches responsibility. Finding ways to speak to power, while not losing its power, is the dilemma the church in the new millennium is and will continue to face. The true Church is not a stranger to challenges. The true Church, by whatever denominational name it carries, will be a lightening rod for trouble and controversy. Given the fact that this is not home for the Bride of Christ, its evolution must continue. As John the Beloved wrote, it does not appear what we shall be, but when He appears we will be like Him.⁴⁷

These two denominations have a strong social outreach and consciousness, but fall short of the micro-level approach to ministry, namely teaching to the personal practical application of the biblical truth, which leads to true empowerment. Empowerment is at the heart of the PTU and leadership development. Because denominational ministries are still the largest church establishments in the United States, it is necessary for any approach to ministry reformation to consider their influence and to evaluate their potential involvement.

In Stephen Charles Mott’s works, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* he highlights the complexity, irony and conflict of the Christian church and its role in social order. Mott develops his thesis by establishing a foundation for Christian involvement in social

⁴⁷ 1 Jn 3:2. NAS

settings using a Judeo-Christian theology. His treatise on biblical ethics and social change provides a solid framework for ministry within the urban context. Although the Reign of God extends beyond the city limits, it may find its fullest experience within its complex environments. Mott's ten-point directive assists in implementing a new biblical ethic into the urban equation. The application of the principle that the church is a counter-culture will buttress the action of other agencies working within the community. Mott's exposé on the church as a culture within a culture is revealing. He also contends that ethics are informed by theology. Consequently, the out-working of church programs are a direct indication of the underlying ethos imbedded within that particular church culture. The theology that supports this divide must be adjusted accordingly to adequately address the disconnection between biblical information received and principles practiced. This process and *metanoia*, is the challenge being addressed in this project and the aim of the PTU.

PART 2: CONCEPTUALIZATION

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several books and articles, which are referenced in the Selected Bibliography, that have greatly informed this Thesis-project. However, the core research was under-girded by key foundational works. They are presented in no particular order, but each influenced my thinking in related but specific ways. There are multiplicities of approaches to problem solving within the urban context. As discussed earlier, the vehicle for bringing about *metanoia* is the implementation of a system of learning that integrates theology, theory and practical life application. The works below address the intricacies of urban ministry, adult learning, systems thinking, team building, community transformation and biblical discipleship and these subjects find expression and redress within the Practical Truth University.

Eldin Villafane, Seek the Peace of the City, Reflections on Urban Ministry, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995.

Seek the Peace of the City is a landmark work written by Dr. Eldin Villafane and published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995. It contemporizes Jeremiah's words, chapter 29, verses four through seven, to the nation of Israel during a time of exile in Babylon. It contextualizes rather extensively the ancient concept of *shalom* while exploring its meaning and application to current ministry paradigms. Dr. Villafane departs from the over-simplified notion that ministry is church based and sets clearly the purpose of the church as being beyond the building and worship services. As a scholar,

Dr. Villafane expresses the need for further study of urban ministry, especially among those who are indigenous to the urban core. He emphasizes that empowering the poor is the most effective long-term means of redeeming the cities of this nation and the world. His work is outlined in three significant but interrelated parts.

The first section, Urban Socio-Theology, speaks to the need for a working knowledge of theology within the context of sociological constructs. The second section, Urban Ministry, addresses the reality, sometimes-harsh realities of practicing theology in the urban communities. The last section, gives light to the why and how of creating an urban based theological educational system for church leadership.

Dr. Villafane's work is a primer for all urban ministry education. The clarity in which he exposes the "hills and the valleys" of urban ministry as well AS the need for a theological education makes sense to the lay-person and the scholar. It is a valuable tool in understanding the complexity as well as the urgency for more effective informed urban ministries and churches. Dr. Villafane's "real" approach is particularly helpful for the work to which I have been assigned. *Seek the Peace of the City* introduced me to the theology behind urban ministry and more specifically ministry to the underserved. It placed city ministry in a biblical framework that made it an inseparable aspect of ministry as a whole. In essence, it provides me with a working theology that informs the very heart of vision and practice.

The focus of *Seek the Peace of the City* is the theological paradigm as communicated by the Prophet Jeremiah, chapter 29, verses four through seven:

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens and eat their produce. 'Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give

your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease.' Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.⁴⁸

Dr. Villafane uses the opportunity, albeit misfortune, being experienced by God's people, to demonstrate the present apathy toward the well-being of the city and its inhabitants.

The heart of the aforementioned chapter and the mission of the church are wisely stated by the ancient Greek understanding of the word, *ecclesia*, which refers to "the called out ones to discuss the affairs of the city".⁴⁹ *Seek the Peace of the City* brilliantly unravels the mystery of the problem of our urban communities and their solution. Villafane defends with authority the importance of urban focused scholarship as a means of shoring-up the foundation for healthy growth of the urban church. He provides a common language for discussing the complexity of urban ministry.

Seek the Peace of the City introduces a more complete spirituality. It does not dismiss the need for personal growth and transformation, but it calls the believer to go beyond the spiritual basics. It speaks to the need for a more inclusive and comprehensive out-working of one's spirituality to include other people and other things, including institutional reform. Dr. Villafane uses the phrase, "the double focus and goal of Christianity" as a way of describing this paradigm shift.

Seeking the Peace of the City incorporates preaching the gospel to and collaborating with those who seem to need it the most. While the "poor" as Jesus said will always be with you, one of the hallmarks of effective ministry is the liberation of the bound. Therefore, approaching urban ministry from the position of "coming along side

⁴⁸ Jer 29:4-7. NAS

⁴⁹ Villafane, *Seek the Peace*, p.2

to help”, rather than from patronization, liberates and supports the communities to which God’s people have been exiled.

One of the most important insights that Dr. Villafane gives regarding ministry in the Urban Context concerns patience – ‘burning patience’. He seamlessly connects the challenges of ministry and the reward with the cohesive substance of time. The reality that the problems that we are facing were not created in a day highlights the fact that it will require resolve and unbroken focus of those called to rectify. He dismisses the notion that a program or a church service will eliminate the problems most commonly associated with the urban communities. Dr. Villafane concludes that a church culture change must occur for our cities to be revolutionized. The health of the urban community will evolve as churches transition from being a static organization to a living organism, which lives for growth, inclusion, and expansion. The theology, which *Seek the Peace of the City* espouses, is holistic and comprehensive, addressing the needs of the whole person. It goes further by recognizing the need to train leaders within the urban core to carry the mission of the citywide welfare as opposed to institutional survival.

The overarching theme of *shalom*, as articulated in this work, has enlarged my view of the ‘world’ or *cosmos*. I now see the mission of the church as being global in span and inclusive in practice. This approach is not motivated by the goal of building a larger church numerically, but by serving the welfare of all of God’s creation. If the Bible is the cornerstone of ministry, then *Seek the Peace of the City* is the frame upon which its the church must be built.

PTU is an integral cog in teaching the church how to re-engage the world in which we live. The term “practical” speaks the need for relevant and livable truth; a truth

that can be applied to the daily life of the believer. Often, both saint and sinner alike have misunderstood the purpose of the church by relegating its benefits to the great beyond or as the opiate of the masses. The Lord's church must regain its meaning and purpose in society by being influential from within its fabric, rather than always addressing the problems from the spectator's seat. Additionally, as believers realize their mandate to be "critically engaged" and understand the theology and practical matters related to involvement they will be transformative and curative. In reality, the success of PTU can only be weighed in light of its ability to create family and community healers – agents of *shalom*.

Peter M. Senge. The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. New York: 1990.

The Fifth Discipline is broken up into five major parts: How Our Actions Create Our Reality... and How We Can Change It; The Fifth Discipline: The Cornerstone of the Learning Organization; The Core Disciplines: Building the Learning Organization; Prototypes and Coda. Each section is true to the basic thesis of this work, namely all dimensions of an organization are interdependent upon the other. Parts 1 through 5 illustrate this point precisely. Senge takes our everyday organizational and relationship issues and builds the case that our behavior is driven by our perception of how we think things work.

My thesis – personal and community transformation is achieved as the collective changes the way they think – finds its genesis in the Greeks usage of the word *metanoia* - (*shift of the mind/meta, above or nous, noia mind*). In a strict classical sense, the word *metanoia* means to shift or adjust the way(s) one thinks. In Biblical terms, this word is

translated often, repentance. In light of this project, metanoia is learning or shifting or moving of old information or ways of thinking to embrace new ones. The PTU is a catalyst and conduit for metanoia. It is an environment in which old presuppositions are challenged and new theories are tested. The cursory understanding of the word repent carries the idea of behavior modification. When repentance is preached from our pulpits the hearer is challenged to amend her or his ways. Although repentance does demand behavioral adjustments, the principle to bring about this change lies within a mode of thought or a mental model. Therefore to bring about informed behavior changes, a change of thought needs to be the primary act of repentance. The PTU curriculum consists of many subjects; with a goal of beyond the accumulation of information, but practical application of that information which envelops the twin principles of repentance – thought and action.

Senge's work is a cornerstone that demonstrates the need for the creation of the PTU. PTU is by design a learning community that fosters community learning. *The Fifth Discipline* brilliantly states the case for strategic thinking and team learning as indispensable aspects for corporate successes. The case is made for developing an organizational philosophy of and for learning. Its primary thesis is that without a way of learning in an interrelated and collective fashion no organization can sustain growth or improvement. The PTU concept is a pedagogical tool to insure the continual growth and vitality of cellular health with the church. In other words, as the individuals are stronger, the organism is stronger. It is pointless to "sustain" an organization, if the organisms are faltering. Senge argues that having a vision is not enough, there must be a shared vision of both responsibility and commitment of resources, plans and heart. The world is a

collection of related forces. Organizations must continually learn how to learn together. This collective learning becomes the seamless method of building consensus or shared vision, changing of mental models and the fostering and strengthening of relationships. PTU is a new culture for learning, not just the machinery through which a mission statement is moved through an organization. Senge states that the difference between traditional authoritarian “controlling organizations” is the ability to master certain basic disciplines. Dynamic synergy is the result of mastering certain basic disciplines. But inherent within this shift is the notion that other disciplines need to be unlearned. The PTU becomes the corporate trainer working the new disciplines into the mind and spirit of the organization.

Systems Thinking as defined by Senge is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools to make the organizational patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively. The creation of the PTU and its practice are a by-product of systems thinking. Recognizing that the small learning cluster, of which the PTU is comprised, is a classic opportunity for each member to learn and be nourished by others. Consequently, an interrelatedness and interdependency is realized and valued. It is the interrelated actions and learning process of PTU that have a profound impact on the outcomes. Systems thinking fuses the other four disciplines (Personal Mastery, Mental Models, Shared Vision, and Team Learning) together to form a unit of movement and operation. PTU becomes the brain of the church organization, connecting all of its membership in a cohesive fashion.

Personal Mastery “is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality

objectively.”⁵⁰ As eluded to before, organizational growth is directly related and correlated to individual growth. An organization is only as strong as its weakest member. And consequently, to ignore personal development of individuals threatens the existence of the whole. Personal Mastery begins with clarifying the things that really matter to us, of living our lives in the service of our highest aspirations. The genius is in matching or blending what matters personally to what the corporate vision might be. PTU allows for the growth of the individual without hindering the maturing of the group by offering topics of study that are important to both the individual and the church organization.

Mental Models are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, pictures or images that influence our understanding of the world. Working with mental models, starts with our willingness to look in the mirror. It is a discipline, according to Senge, that shows us what the “invisible” programming that controls our behavior individually and corporately. It is precisely the “unearthing” of these mental images that PTU seeks to accomplish. By focused intimate learning groups the participant will be methodically exposed to truth(s) that if embraced, can transform the way the one thinks and how they process their environment.

Many leaders have personal visions that never get translated into shared visions. Building a shared vision is the art of binding people around a common identity or goal. This involves uncovering or discovering shared visions of the future that foster genuine commitment rather than compliance. The umbrella concept of PTU expresses the message of shared vision – which is primarily, we grow through learning. It emphasizes in practical terms the importance of communal learning. The innovative learning

⁵⁰ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 6.

environment places the emphasis on the health of the participant or in this case the congregant, rather than on the individual vision of a leader.

The PTU format, by design, creates an environment in which team learning becomes organic. It by precept and example stresses the need for communication between students and a cooperative learning environment. Using the Biblical reference of the church being the Body of Christ, and the sum of the parts comprise the whole, PTU carries the explicit message if we are going to be successful in life it requires living and learning together as one. As Senge asserts, the goal (team learning) being the intelligence of the team becomes greater and more important than the intelligence of the individual.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The Cost of Discipleship: New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. 2001.

The work of Bonhoeffer is a classic exposition on the subject of the meaning discipleship/making disciples. It stands as one of the clearest voices and arguments for the need for a Practical Truth University. The goal of our church gatherings should culminate in disciplined learners who are able to teach others. Bonhoeffer offers a “remix” of the time tested biblical paradigm that reminds the would-be churchperson that following Jesus is a walk of death. He leaves nothing for conjecture, in that Bonhoeffer says, “when Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die.” Although this work is not for the new convert, the information nevertheless is vital to proper spiritual development. The idea of simply allowing anyone who responds to an altar call to be considered a follower of Jesus is inconsistent with the New Testament. For it leaves out the fundamental premise that following Christ, as a disciple and not a philosopher can and often does mean challenges, hardships, loneliness, ridicule, and possibly physical death.

If we, as the Church of Jesus continue to water down the meaning of being a Christian, we will continue to reap the results of an anemic, sodium free faith.

The Cost of Discipleship reads much like a curriculum for understanding the Christian faith. From the opening lessons on the Cross of Christ, Discipleship and Grace to the spiritual out-working of these themes in the On-Going Life of the Church, *the Cost of Discipleship* sets-forth in no uncertain terms what it means to call oneself a follower of Christ. The word(s) disciple and Christian are often used in our post-modern communities of faith. It is used to describe both saint and sinner whose basic tenor is sympathetic toward the “Christian Religion”. One is said to be a Christian if born within the Republic and therefore hold United States citizenship. Bonhoeffer strikes at the very core of this heresy. Discipleship, according to Bonhoeffer, means obedience, well beyond a confession of belief in a Deity.⁵¹ Obedience to the Word has been replaced with religious reasoning. Such reasoning being perpetuated as discernment, have left the Church of Jesus Christ bereft of disciples but teeming with students of philosophy. Bonhoeffer’s timeless enterprise challenges us to face, yet again; our faulty reasoning and calls us loudly to the disciples’ life.

The Cost of Discipleship references the need for a new training module for the church. The basic premise of the PTU is to provide the opportunity for organic discipleship development. In essence, a disciple is the end product of PTU. Bonhoeffer gives us the pathway to discipleship, which includes the cost, the process, grace and pitfalls. As we look at the overall condition of the church in the urban context, it is evident that in many cases, that discipleship is no longer the focus. Some Christian education does occur, but this is usually confined to conduct and doctrine. Very little time

⁵¹ Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 61.

and even fewer resources are dedicated to what Jesus taught about the complete transformation required in order to be a Christian.

The title of Bonhoeffer's work speaks to the heart of mission of the Lord's Church on earth. It is the expressed mandate given by the Lord Himself, that His followers were to enter their age and cause other men and woman to become disciples too. The call upon the church is to create disciplined learners out of the masses of those who only hear the message of the Gospel. Bonhoeffer's writing is a document of remembrance – it puts the believer back in touch with the role and mission of the Body of Christ. The PTU program embraces the concept of discipleship as the over-arching pedagogy for the church.

True to the premise of my thesis, *metanoia* is a prerequisite to lasting personal transformation. This *metanoia*, translated repentance in the New Testament is the fulcrum from which all of Christianity springs. Without *metanoia* religious activity is nothing more than a thin veneer. The change which is asked for in Matthew 3:8, Matthew 4:7 find's its genesis in radical adjustment in the way one thinks. This change is not an event but rather a process. Although it is evident a decision to change can occur in an instant, the change itself happens over time. The time that Jesus initial disciples spent with Him was an intentional training period that methodically sought to introduce a new way of thinking. Jesus taught a total surrender. Bonhoeffer states "discipleship means adherence to Christ, and because Christ is the object of that adherence, it must take the form of discipleship."⁵² In concert with the tenor of Bonhoeffer's work, PTU attempts to uncover the truth of Biblical discipleship by teaching and training participants in a very intentional fashion.

⁵² Ibid., 63.

Although the essence of the PTU is not a breeding ground for the development of traditional ministries or church plants, it addresses the more fundamental need for a Christian liberal arts style education. It provides the spiritually hungry with transformative information on areas that matter to their life. Having stated that, there is a tract that is geared toward the more mainline spiritual disciplines that one may find in a Bible School for instance. But as the name of the university implies, what is being offered is “practical” rather than solely theoretical.

Mark Shaw: 10 Great Ideas from Church History: Illinois. InterVarsity Press. 1997.

Theologian Mark Shaw compiles historical high watermarks from church history regarding the “things that make for successful ministry”. He uses several great revivalists and Christian thinkers on topics including: truth, spirituality, unity, and assurance, worship renewal, growth, the lost, justice and fellowship. Shaw’s basic premise is that we can learn from history rather than chasing unproven fads. The topics mentioned above all have relevance within the context of the PTU; however it is John Wesley’s concept of discipleship in the chapter; “A Vision for Growth” that is most germane to the subject matter of my thesis.

The contemporary church in America is weak. By most standards of old, it is far less influential in lives of the urban community than in the early part of the 20th century, despite its swelling ranks. The evangelical church, as Shaw points out, is “filling up with spectators, but emptying of disciples.”⁵³ The emphasis seems to be on numerical growth rather than qualitative increase. From what we read in the magazines, or watch on our

⁵³ Mark Shaw, *10 Great Ideas from Church History: A Decision-Makers Guide To Shaping Your Church*: (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997.), 135.

favorite Christian networks, what is celebrated is the mega-church, the coliseum-type of ministries. There is virtually no mention of community churches and the service to humanity that these entities provide. As Bishop Donald Hilliard Jr., states, mega in size, does not mean mega in impact – I could not agree more.

Volumes of books, scores of schools and thousands of churches have been founded in recognition of Wesley. Denominations, Methodist and subsequent offshoots of it, are found on every inhabited continent. However, what is little known, and even less emulated is John Wesley's passion and methodology for disciples and discipleship practices.⁵⁴

Shaw reduces John Wesley's concept of discipleship into four primary segments: 1) the necessity of discipleship, 2) the necessity of small groups for discipleship, 3) the necessity of lay leadership for discipleship, and 4) holiness and service as goals for discipleship. Whereas, any self-respecting church would have to fain interest in "making disciples" Wesley's emphasis puts disciple-making again at the forefront of the strategic plan and consequently it serves as the battle cry of the PTU.

Necessity of Discipleship

Wesley arrived at the necessity of discipleship after realizing that the converts under his ministry were "half-awakened". I am more and more convinced, Wesley writes, "the devil himself desires nothing more than this, that the people of any place should be half-awakened and then left to themselves to fall asleep again. Therefore, I determine, by the grace of God, not to strike one stroke in any place where I cannot follow the blow."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ibid, 141.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 142.

As with all believer's, theology influences ethics or beliefs. Wesley's burden for discipleship was shaped by his conviction regarding personal holiness. He concluded that one could not be truly holy without being a disciple. Consequently, Wesley laid great "stress on Christian perfection and the development of methods" to produce true disciples.⁵⁶

It is precisely the creation of disciples that PTU seeks to address. In the post-modern church, outside of Sunday school curriculums very little focused pedagogy exists in the area of discipleship. As one surveys the typical curriculum, the majority of the material is directed toward understanding the Bible in its context, which has merit, but minimal attention is given to practical application. By creating a culture of discipleship within the local church, discipleship making becomes a natural next step to conversion.

The Necessity of Small Groups

Wesley felt that true discipleship occurred in small group settings, five to ten members, led by laymen. These groups existed for the express purpose of maturation to accountability. It is estimated during Wesley's tenure, that twenty percent of all Methodists belonged to a small group.⁵⁷ The "band" as they were called had only six rules: 1) "meet weekly, 2) be punctual, 3) begin with singing and prayer, 4) to speak to each of us in order, freely and plainly state the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting, 5) end meetings with prayer for each, and 6) to desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching

⁵⁶ Ibid., 142.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 142

questions as may be, concerning their state, sins and temptations.”⁵⁸ Jesus worked with a small group of individuals to start a world-wide movement. Although, He indeed preached to multitudes, it was His closest associates that were disciplined. The larger settings seemed to be the mass invitation, inviting others into a discipleship relationship. The configuration of the majority of PTU classes is a maximum of twelve students. In rare cases class enrollment would exceed this number. It is the synergy of the intimate setting that fosters a deeper fellowship and provides for optimum learning and accountability partnership.

The Necessity of Lay Leadership

It is estimated that by the eighteen-hundreds, Methodist small groups had over 100,000 members and 10,000 lay leaders.⁵⁹ Under Wesley’s leadership one out of every five converts were drafted into lay leadership. Individuals who were uneducated, the common folk of the day were placed in significant leadership positions. His discipleship program would not have been realized without the mass mobilization of the laity.⁶⁰

In an ideal world, utilizing only seminary trained individuals to lead small group programs would be preferred. However, this is not only unrealistic and impractical, but unnecessary. The PTU seeks to use those individuals within the Body of Christ who have a demonstrated proficiency in the area of study. For instance, if the class being offered in our College of Family Life, is on raising teenagers in the 21st Century, every effort would be made to contract with a person who at least has a teenager living at home or one that has successfully passed through these often difficult parenting years. Certain criteria

⁵⁷ Ibid., 145.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 145.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 145.

would be employed in selecting this individual or couple; however, it would not be based upon their religious status.

Holiness and Service as Goals for Discipleship

Having the end in mind is the preferred starting point. Wesley felt that true discipleship would impact not only the church proper, but the greater society as well. “Goodness and goodwill, spirituality and service to others: these are the goals of Wesley’s evangelism and discipleship,”⁶¹ As mentioned before, Wesley’s theology of personal holiness, drove his philosophy of discipleship. And the by-product of discipleship would be the birth of a new citizen. “When holiness and justice are the goals of discipleship, a tough-minded Christian can be produced, one who can truly reform both church and nation.”⁶²

The stated objective of the PTU is the development of urban disciples; a leadership that is thoroughly awakened to the biblical principles which should govern one’s personal life and the society in which one lives. A church which produces disciples which are prepared to live and function inside the ecclesia and in the polis is making disciples who can go into the entire world. PTU is designed to be good and do well within this present culture. Its class structure, content and philosophy are focused on creating a relevant church that is secure in its identity and in its mission. Personal holiness and service to others meet this objective.

⁶¹ Ibid., 146.

⁶² Ibid., 146.

Andrew Davey. Urban Christianity and Global Order: Theological Resources For An Urban Future. (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishing Inc. 2002.)

The task of urban ministry is solidly based in urban theology. Urban ministry is no longer an ancillary discipline within lost milieu of theological discussions, but has evolved into a critical tool in understanding the roll and praxis of the post-modern church. Davey asserts early in his writing that the “world is now an urban place.”⁶³ And the need for the church institution both urban and otherwise to acknowledge this reality is ever so clear. Due to the geographical proximity between what is considered urban verse suburban the influence of one upon the other is unavoidable and quite predictable. Davey brings to bear the need for such realistic worldview by his usage of the word “globalization” to emphasize the smallness of the world community.

Urban Christianity and Global Order is separated into two parts. The first part is Understanding Urban and Globalization and the second, Urban Experience and Biblical Space. The primary draws our attention to the complexity of the urban community and its relative place within the global context and the latter deals with the urban environment and its biblical ramifications for the church and the churches mission within it. Both reviews are necessary to present wholistic answers to challenging issues found within our world today. Davey points out, something that urban planners have known for years, that in the first decade of the 21st century over half the world’s population will live in urban centers (39% non-urban dwellers vs. 61% urban dwellers).⁶⁴ He also extends the discussion of the ever increasing population within the urban areas to include the

⁶³ Andrew Davey, *Urban Christianity and Global Order: Theological Resources For An Urban Future*: (Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishing Inc., 2002) 7.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5.

challenges and opportunities this presents to social services and the church. The problems of the urban community are also compounded by the transitory living habits of its residents, migration, community tensions and civil conflict.⁶⁵

Davey recognizes that in certain circles there remains denial as to the need for an “urban theology”. However, there is a clarion call for practitioners to move from the argument to “identify the strategies and resources that are needed if communities of Christian faith are to be salt, light and leaven in the urban world.”⁶⁶

Within the PTU culture, the participant is the believer, and the end-user or ultimate beneficiary is the community in which the participants work, worship and live. Consequently, the question of where people actually live becomes less important. The more important issue is where people are being “Christianized”? It is in the community of faith that transformation can occur most naturally and impacts by default the other aspect of their environment. PTU is portable, knowing no geographical boundaries or limitations. Classes can actually be held in a participant’s living-room, dorm room, board room or public classroom. PTU does not need to be conducted in the physical church or in an urban setting. There is some wisdom in bringing the educational process into the community for easy access and assimilation.

Eldin Villafane, Bruce Jackson, Robert Evans, and Alice Evans. Transforming the City: Reframing Education For Urban Ministry, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing 2002.

The current trend in missions is for churches and para-church organizations to be interconnected with other agencies that are outside the traditional format in charter, but

⁶⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 10.

not in mission. As traditional ecclesiology gives way to a practical theology of inclusiveness, the ultimate mission of the church is fulfilled, namely, *shalom* for all people. An urban theology that embraces a holistic ministry will speak the language of the people; a message of caring, compassion and incarnation.

As with any program or ministry, there are advantages and unintended consequences. The connection enjoyed by Metro Strategy and the Industrial Areas Foundation allowed the Foundation to expand the effectiveness of its mission from developing leadership capacities to building relationships that foster systemic change within society. However, as the Foundation folds others into its mission, it loses, or may lose some control over the final outcomes. The Metro Strategy approach to ministry is very inclusive and eclectic; involving groups from various spiritual and geographical demographics.

One of the key questions that are a natural outcome of aggressive community-organizing centers is around whether a particular methodology is consistent with Christian Ethics? Since theology informs ethics, questions about theology are questions about ethics or a particular ethos. What are the key values and core beliefs which fuel the programs? What ethics are driving aggressive community-organizing? Another question that must be faced is whether God is aggressive or passive in relationship to social systemic change? This is a valid question because the purpose of community-organizing, at least in part, is to move the masses in a direction of self-reliance and self-government. Intentional community-organizing challenges the apathy usually associated with urban churches. Consequently, involving the community to help itself exposes the impotency of the church. Although at face value, theological questions seem fitting, however, in

actuality the underlining matter is one of methodology, not of orthodoxy. When the prevailing religious culture is uncomfortable with a process or method that is foreign to their ethic, they pose theological questions similar to those asked of Jesus regarding the Sabbath and other points of law, which can have a negative impact on the planned endeavor.

The Metro Strategy provides a broader approach to evangelism than what is considered normative. Evangelism in the Metro Strategy paradigm sees evangelism as the involvement of the believer in the core of life, not simply in the halls of the church. In the strictest definition of evangelism – the heralding of “Good News” – evangelism is an opportunity to bring the evangel to other arenas of a person’s life. The Good News to those who are under the yoke of oppression, for instance, is liberty. Therefore, the ideal for the church is to express the good news by being part of the advocacy projects, programs and ministries that foster justice for the wider community. This strategy is not about the professional clergy being in the forefront, but the development of laity to address the issues of justice for all by being the solution themselves. The Metro Strategy is designed to precisely accomplish this objective.

The Ecumenical Approach to social ministry has several advantages and disadvantages. Ecumenicalism allows more congregants who call upon the name of the Lord to participate in the building of a shared community. The diversity within the Body also allows for a more complete witness to the community being served. The disadvantages of ecumenicalism in this context are expressed potentially in the different values or ethos which is inherent within any religious group or sub-group. Having

multiple ideologies at the table will weaken any one particular group's effectiveness, which may not be pejorative.

A holistic urban strategy takes into account the whole person and sphere of a person's existence. Such a strategy embraces the reality of industries and institutions as environs that must be infused with Kingdom values. This particular strategy further causes the power structures to serve people rather than be served by the people. A comprehensive strategy will prepare leaders to partner with and belong to the larger community. It will take into consideration the person and their problems as well as the systemic issues that institutionalize poverty, injustice, health disparities and many other social evils.

The Metro Strategy is a prototype of the kind of ministry that is needed in every community. As portrayed in Villafane's works, *Seek the Peace of the City*, and *Prayer for the City* as well as *Transforming the City*, the Metro Strategy embraces the idea that the role of the *ecclesia* is comprehensive rather than simply sacerdotal. Similarly, Wallis, in *Faith Works*, details the 'how and why' of the imperative of Christian engagement in the fabric of society. The Metro Strategy seems to be the fruit of proper theology and Christian ethics.

Transforming the City: Reframing Education For Urban Ministry, by Eldin Villafane, et al., presents me with a particular challenge. For it reminds me as a practitioner that nothing in society can change without paradigm shifts within the urban theology of the *ecclesia*. The movement away from simply studying about what is ethical to doing what is ethically correct is one of the main reasons for a contextualized

education. *Transforming the City* presents theory and practice, with the current moving toward theological relevancy.

This work has a direct relevance to my thesis project. Through my project, I hope to establish the need for a new system of education for the church beyond catechism. The basic premise that warrants a new system is that without “*metanoia*” behavior will not change significantly let alone, enduringly. *Transforming the City* emphasizes and chronicles well the need for a new agenda, a drastic urgent reformation of thought. How is a reformation to take effect? The development of the PTU will allow those who are hearing the call to reformation to have a system of education that connects theology with their every day experiences, thus bridging the gap between a new doctrine and a new practice of said doctrine.

Stephen Charles Mott, Biblical Ethics and Social Change, New York: Oxford University, 1982.

Stephen Charles Mott's work, “*Biblical Ethics and Social Change*” highlights the complexity, irony and conflict of the Christian church and its role in social order. Mott develops his thesis by establishing a foundation for Christian involvement in social settings using a biblical theology. His argument is present on each page, directing the reader from an inward asceticism to a demonstrative outworking of conviction based upon a Judeo-Christian ethic.

One of the most impacting connections made by Mott is between personal sin and the sin of or within a society. His emphasis regarding the role of the Christian community in the everyday affairs of society, especially concerning the poor, and the infirmed are quite compelling. He also concludes that it is the Christian community's responsibility to

work for change within systems that perpetuate social ills. Admittedly, I am supportive in practice and in theory of a theology of social involvement, which Mott reinforces through uses of the biblical metaphor “salt and light”.

Mott’s treatise on biblical ethics and social change provides a solid framework for ministry within the urban context. Although the Reign of God extends beyond the city limits, it may find its’ fullest experience in complex environments. Mott’s ten-point directive assists in implementing a new biblical ethic into the urban equation. The application of the principle that the church is a counter-culture will buttress the action of other agencies working within the community. Mott’s exposé on the church as a culture within a culture is revealing. *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* should be required reading for all those who wish to do truth, not just preach about it.

Mott’s message is probing. It turns the mirror for reflection on my theological preferences; challenging me to test them against a biblical paradigm. Given the understanding that all ministry flows from some ethic, I am further challenged to examine my ethic in view of biblical principle and theology. Determining my most closely held values is necessary to develop a biblically centered urban ministry. Understanding that my ethics flow from my biblical theology demands that I examine the guiding principles, the ethics by which we conduct ministry in the Greater Providence area. Developing a sound biblical ethic will enable the ministry to be clearer regarding the whys and how’s of the ministry.

In light of the emphasis which Mott places on the development of an ethics based on theology, the PTU could aptly be termed a university of ethics. For all learning seeks at some level to import a particular system of beliefs. PTU unashamedly and

methodically focuses on uncovering the biblical ethics within the topics of study and to teach the ways in which those new “truths” should be applied and practiced in our daily life. Mott’s premise that society’s present state of affairs is the direct result of the closely guarded ethos is the starting point for community transformation. PTU classes recognized the prevailing mental models and endeavors to dismantle, adjust the affairs within a biblical paradigm. How can community transformation occur without a reformation of thought? PTU could become the place where ethics are tested, tried, and when necessary dismissed from the heart and soul of the church membership; which is the “salt of the earth and the light of the world”.

CHAPTER THREE
AN URBAN THEOLOGY OF *METANOIA*
TOWARD PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION THROUGH
SYSTEMIC PROCESS

A Theology of Urban Ministry

The canvas upon which urban theology is painted is contained in the word *shalom*. The concept of *shalom* as portrayed in scripture is a graphic description of God's heart for His people and in general for humanity. Traditionally, *shalom* simply meant peace. The peace that is often associated with *shalom* is the absence of conflict or quietness. However, Biblically, *shalom* has a deeper and more pervasive meaning. There are five significant aspects that are reflected in the word *shalom*: Welfare, Prosperity, Harmony, Justice and Salvation.⁶⁷ This broader definition of peace is essential to understanding the role of the local church in its mission of urban community transformation.

Shalom is elegantly illustrated in Jeremiah's exhortation to the people of Israel while in Babylonian captivity. His letter to the surviving elders is a rebuttal to false Prophet Hananiah who prophesied that God will deliver them from captivity within two years. God's people were being led to believe that there was no time or necessity for them to be meaningfully engaged in the affairs of the community in which they were then residents. God impressed upon Jeremiah to announce judgment on Hananiah for "having persuaded this nation to trust in lies... and having preached rebellion against the Lord."⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Notes from lecture given by Dr. Eldin Villafane during Residency 2, June 9, 2005.

⁶⁸ Jer 28:15-16.

God's response to Hananiah's prophecy was to assign the nation the task of administrating *shalom* (welfare, prosperity, harmony, justice and salvation) in the city of their captivity. These two diametrically opposed theological positions are at the heart of the urban ministry debate. Some take the position of Hananiah suggesting that the return of Jesus is eminent so why bother with reformation or liberation. While others argue that the church's place is among the secular society. Admittedly, there are many variations and positions that fall between these two polar opposites.

The challenge that is confronted through this program is the need for ministers to develop a theology of urban ministry. For many, a call and placement in an urban context constitutes urban ministry. Although this may be true, that is not the same as having an urban theology. As will be indicated in some detail later, urban theology involves the witness of God in the midst of all that constitutes city life. This witness is more pervasive than a 'tract blitz' of evangelistic literature. It involves, but is not limited to, a physical presence of God's representative agency on earth, the Church. The Apostle Paul writes, "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, and according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."⁶⁹

The paradigm offered by Jeremiah involves method and strategy, economic and social mandates, and the requirement of procreation for the purposes of expanding the influence of a people empowered by shalom.⁷⁰ Shalom is (at) the heart of urban theology. It could be argued that eschatology informs one's soteriology and 'urban theology'. I contend that a minister's eschatological perspective can influence how they perceive

⁶⁹ Eph. 3:10-11. NAS

⁷⁰ Notes from lecture given by Dr. Eldin Villafane during Residency 2, June 9, 2005

ministry, the needs of the people, including themselves. Knowing that the end of time is closer today than in the day of Jeremiah, the fact remains that no one knows the day or the hour.⁷¹ Consequently, identifying ways to bring out Biblical *shalom* should still be the motivation for relevant ministry in the urban context. In our theology of urban ministry, we will look at three fundamental elements: 1) A theology of place – the city as a context of ministry; 2) A theology of peace – the city as a context for wholeness; and 3) A theology of Prayer – the city as a context for prayer.

A Theology of Place: The City as Context of Ministry

The Bible is God's Word revealed in and through cities. Although, theologically speaking, God dwells outside of time and space; He works with humanity in both. God of the Holy Scriptures is contextual. His plan, His purposes, and power are all expressed through a particular setting or environment. Without an understanding in which context a particular event occurred, the danger of misunderstanding greatly increases.

There are many reasons why God used the city as the context for His prophetic unveiling. Cities are the primary place of residence for the overwhelming percentage of the inhabitants of planet earth. As Robert C. Linthicum states in the *City of God, City of Satan* the Bible is an Urban Book.⁷² It is the inspired writings of men who lived in and passed through cities. They fought, bled and died over cities. The city, as Linthicum writes, "Is the locus of a great and continuing battle between the God of Israel and/or the church and the god of the world."⁷³ Our cities are the exact latitude and longitude for the

⁷¹ Acts 1:7. NAS

⁷² Robert C. Linthicum, *City of God, City of Satan: A Biblical Theology of the Urban Church* (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 20

⁷³ Ibid., 23.

battle between God and Satan. This apocalyptic war is not over dirt or bricks and mortar; it is over the souls of humanity. The city is the gathering place, the place where the majority of people live and work. This is where commerce, the arts, the education of the majority of people takes place so it only makes sense that the war would at least find it's epicenter in the urban core.

The city I have been called to is located in Providence, Rhode Island. Providence is the second largest in city in the New England region, second to Boston. In Providence proper there are approximately 178,000 people. Within ten square miles of center city lives another 500,000 dwellers, making the Greater Providence area the third highest concentration (per capita) of urban dwellers anywhere in the nation. Providence and the surrounding area are ethnically and culturally diverse as well. This city which boasts of first generation Latinos, Asians and Africans is facing many of the same challenges faced by other large cities – education and language disparities, unemployment, racism, violent crime etc., is indeed the battle field. Providence also has the distinct “honor” of being the caretaker of children of which forty-one percent live in poverty. Four out of ten of the children live below the poverty threshold as established by the United States government. Poverty is the starting point to many of the other social ills presently ravaging our cities. With the physical landscape of the state being only forty-seven miles long, thirty-eight miles wide, the concentration of people, especially within the five core cities presents a significant opportunity for effective biblically based ministry.

When one examines the scriptures from a purely historically perspective, it is hard to miss the fact that Jesus' message and His target group were the marginalized of His day. In contrast, much of the preaching of the postmodern church is centered on a

personal salvation that borders on narcissism. The average congregant of this day and age gets a regular dose of what God will do for them, but not what God wants to do through them. Jesus' ministry and message was to the hurting, the bound, and the poor. His commission was first given to a group of men to equip others and continue His shalom based outreach. His intention for the poor of spirit, of the soul and of the body is incontrovertible when reading through the lenses of shalom. In essence, the ministry of Jesus is a living urban theology carried out in practical ways.

Jesus taught that ministry was in the moment, in the space and in the hour of need. For Him it was not something that occurred post ascension. In other words, His mandate to His followers involved rules of engagement, not rules of disengagement. He fully expected believers to engage this world's system and to impact it for the good. One counter-argument to this 'involvement' ideology is that believers should remain at a safe distance from the conflict to remain pure and 'unspotted from the world'. This separatist thinking, in my opinion, is one of the major causes of the decay within our society. The New Testament specifically calls for active participation, by summoning us to the high office of 'salt and light'. In H. Richard Niebuhr's classic work, *Christ & Culture*, he devotes an entire chapter to the paradox that exists with Christ and culture (Chapter 5). He lists for the reader the various arguments, or sides of the coin regarding involvement of Christians within the secular culture. Radicals, Niebuhr asserts, "Have protested that these attempts are disguised versions of cultural accommodation of the rigorous gospel,..."⁷⁴ Niebuhr inserts a view of Christ within culture that synthesizes the extremes to Christ and His relationship society, namely, the theology of the Dualist. For

⁷⁴ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture*, (California: Harper and Row, 1951), 149.

in this view, the Dualist “seeks to do justice to the need for holding together as well as for distinguishing between loyalty to Christ and responsibility for culture.”⁷⁵

Engaging the culture of the city is essential to doing theology. The very nature of “God with us” and God dwelling among us alerts us to the intention of God being intimately involved in our lives as we know it. To relegate God to a distant deity, who is not involved in the affairs of humanity, would mean changing the stated mission of Jesus Christ to a symbolic religious monarchy. The point that God was and is committed to the welfare of His creation is clearly evident in the sacrificial death of the Son of God on behalf of the world. The “great act of reconciliation and forgiveness has occurred in the divine-human battle – the act we call crucifixion of Jesus Christ, speaks volumes to the question of God the Father’s concern.”⁷⁶ Biblical record clearly states God’s intention regarding humanity, “While yet we were sinners Christ died for us...”, and “He (*God the Father*) that spared not His only son, how shall He not freely give us all things”⁷⁷

The need for relevant ministry, the meeting of the spiritual, physical and social needs of the *polis* is well documented in ancient and modern history. The poor, as Jesus said, will always be with us. The problem we are faced within the city is that instead of residents moving from the ranks of the impoverished to prosperity, the poor are getting poorer. Generational poverty is the norm. It is in the cities of the United States and in many other nations of the earth where this drama unfolds mercilessly without an end in sight. As the church of the Lord Jesus Christ embraces this reality on one hand and on the other hand the ministry of Biblical *shalom*, our urban centers which are now famous for all that is wrong within society, will become again cities in which to dwell.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 150.

⁷⁷ Rom 5:8; 8:31. NAS

A Theology of Peace: The City as Context for Wholeness

Often the term “peace” is defined as simply rest or the absence of conflict. Especially in our western mental model, peace is seen as tranquility. The Biblical understanding of peace or in the Hebrew tongue, *shalom* does include the idea of rest, however, it is a rest achieved after the things that bring about rest are secured. *Shalom*, the idea of wholeness, nothing broken or missing is the bequest of our Savior. He stated in John’s Gospel, He would be leaving us His Peace.⁷⁸ This concept of peace is captured in the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah and Ezekiel in which God calls for His people to seek and secure the *shalom* of the community in which they are exiled. This theology of peace incorporates the principle of reciprocity or sowing and reaping as it is often called. As the people of God seek the welfare of others, they will stumble upon their own peace.

There are many things inherent within our urban culture that brings about disease. Injustice is evident in every community throughout the cities. There are social inequalities, such as disproportionate numbers of African-American and Latinos in the prison system, racial and gender discrimination, lack of affordable housing and health care for families and children, just to name a few. Does the church have a responsibility to address these issues? Does the modern church, post civil rights of the sixties, have a moral obligation to expand its view of the gospel to include, advocacy, social and legislative reform in direct ways? Eldin Villafane states in his book, *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry*, that “There is a need to extend the evangelicals classical understanding of spirituality’s struggle with the flesh, the world, and the devil with their social correlates, namely sinful social structures, the “world” (kosmos), and

⁷⁸ Jn. 14:1. NAS

principalities and powers.”⁷⁹ He further writes “The inclusion of the social dimension in a redefinition of spirituality is the missing ingredient of contemporary evangelical spirituality.”⁸⁰ I would include not just the contemporary evangelical church, but most of the Protestant church as well. For the number of churches that dot the landscape of North America and Europe, not to mention the numbers of seminarians, there should be a functional presence of shalom within our city limits. The Apostle Paul writes to the Church of Ephesus, “in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,”⁸¹ The Church has the pre-eminent authority on the earth to bring heaven to earth. Notwithstanding, apocalyptic literature and eschatology, the Church has a directive to be agents of change in society, while on earth.

One form in which change can occur is through evangelism. Evangelical theology speaks of evangelism as an event that is solely about getting someone ready for heaven. The broader concept of evangelism, *Kerygma* includes the vertical of earth to heaven, but also heaven on earth application. That does not mean that the Church will be the New Jerusalem, but it does suggest that the Church should be the place where one can obtain a preview of coming attractions. Evangelism, beyond the four “spiritual laws” or “street preaching” must include ministry to the whole person. This view of holistic salvation necessitates an evangelism that begets it. The Evangelical Church quotes the scripture correctly, “to go into the whole world”, but “If the whole church is to take the whole

⁷⁹ Villafane, *Seek the Peace*, 15.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Eph. 3:10-12. NAS

gospel to the whole world, it must be holistic.”⁸² Essentially, the church must be the evangel itself by announcing, by word and deed ‘good news’ wherever evil is thriving. This can only occur as the “missing dimension of social transformation/piety (which includes social witness, social service, and social action, and is thus outer-directed and horizontal) as bona fide spirituality has often been excluded from an authentically biblical and evangelical definition of spirituality” is added to one’s theological understanding of urban ministry.⁸³ The challenge before us, then, is to re-educate the Body regarding its mission.

A Theology of Prayer: the City as the Place of Prayer

Prayer, as is often taught, is simply talking to God. Although this statement is viable, it is not complete. Prayer is as basic as communicating with God, but much more profound in a believer’s life and calling. As a believer, we are God’s point of entry in the earth. Just as Jesus needed a physical, human body, to serve His purpose and destiny, human beings are still needed on the earth to serve God’s purposes. Prayer is one of the key tools, and privileges the believer has in order to fulfill the calling.

Prayer is a required discipline for the urban church and minister. The work that must be done to bring about the *shalom* of God in the urban context cannot be done in the power of human will or gifting alone. Salvation is a work of Grace, not just for the individual but for the society as a whole. Having begun in the Spirit, the Apostle Paul reminds us, we will not be made perfect in the flesh.

⁸² Villafane, *Seek the Peace*, 12.

⁸³ Ibid., 13.

Prayer is also a sign of humility and dependence. Prayerlessness can then be an indication of the sin of self-sufficiency lurking in the heart of a believer. Urban ministry requires Divine intervention. No degree, natural ability, or personal pedigree can accomplish the deep sub-terrain work necessary to bring health and healing to these mean streets. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers and spiritual wickedness in high places.”⁸⁴ The learning of true devotional and warfare prayer is an acquired skill and art form. Prayer would be a beginning for any meaningful engagement in urban ministry. In the PTU curriculum, an entire School is devoted to prayer.

A Theological Framework for the Practical Truth University

The purpose of the Practical Truth University will be to institute topical learning clusters that close the gap between information received and truth applied. Perhaps this is, or at least should be, the goal and aim of all learning; going beyond just the mere acquisition of knowledge to practical application. The PTU is a place for the teaching of practical spirituality. In this section, we will first look at the classical and missiological categories of the churches mission: *Kerygma, Koinonia, Diakonia and Leitourgia*.

There are five theological presuppositions and values upon which the foundation of the PTU is founded: Teaching as Jesus’ primary objective; Developing a Kingdom Mentality as the preferred mindset; Engagement as the Believer’s Role/Job in the earth; Discipleship making as the mission of the church; and empowerment as the chief responsibility of the Church.

⁸⁴ Eph. 6:10. NAS

We live in an ‘information’ age. The world has become a large, diverse neighborhood. There is an insatiable appetite for acquiring information and learning. It can be argued that much of the information being gleaned is unusable or antithetical to the cause of Christ, nevertheless stands as the one commodity people want and need. In order to bring about a *metanoia* within the Body of Christ, new and innovative vehicles to carry this information need to be employed. However, balance cannot be sacrificed upon the altar of novelty. What are necessary are vehicles that understand the value of the classical missiological categories of the churches mission: *Kerygma*, *Koinonia*, *Diakonia* and *Leitourgia*.

Kerygma, which addresses the evangelistic mission of the church, must take on new *modus operandi*. It must assume the role of servant, not just preacher. PTU as designed will encourage and embrace others outside of the Judeo-Christian ethic by inviting them to study and practice the biblical principles for everyday affairs. This *Kerygma* can be seen as an ‘intended’ consequence of approaching evangelism from a holistic perspective. *Kerygma* “entails calling people to reconciliation with God, as well as calling them to community, social service and justice, and spiritual celebration. Therefore, a wholistic *kerygma* will involve both “doing justice and preaching grace.” Through PTU, people from diverse backgrounds and expressions will be exposed to the practical-side of spirituality, thus endearing them to a perspective of God that may be foreign to them. Evangelism happens by default through intelligent integration, and the cross pollination within a strategic learning environment. PTU will also raise the secular community’s awareness that the church is relevant and caring.

The need for **Koinonia** within the community of Saints is often overlooked in our busyness of being ministers. We have accepted fellowship in the form of an occasional outing with “church people” rather than the deep sharing of a common life. The idea of meeting from “house to house” in reference to the Early Churches plan for staying connected was more than an activity, it was essential. The sharing experience was deeply felt. According to the first century church, *Koinonia* was seen as an inseparable part of being a follower of Jesus. Christianity was designed to be done in “community”, not in isolation. The PTU model, allows for the free-flowing of information to occur in natural ways. Peter Senge’s work, *The Fifth Discipline: the Art and Practice of a Learning Organization*, presents this thesis, “the discipline of team learning starts with ‘dialogue’ the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine ‘thinking together.’”⁸⁵ Although his premise is based on secular teams and organizations, it has universal application, especially in an organization like a church that is notoriously patriarchal in its approach to learning. The learning clusters proposed in PTU foster team learning and healthy interdependence. To dialogue, says the Greeks, “meant a free-flowing of meaning through a group, allowing the group to discover insights not attainable individually.”⁸⁶

Jesus’ model of discipleship was intentionally limited to a small number of men. His famous Sermon on the Mount was not a discipleship class, although learning did occur. It was the moments in which He spent with twelve men or fewer that infused the first Apostles with truth. No one is disciplined from a pulpit. The discipline of pedagogy

⁸⁵ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 10.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

suggests that learning takes place best in smaller settings, like those proposed by the curriculum and format of the PTU.

Another category of the church's mission centers on **Diakonia**, a social *Diakonia*. Understanding that the *diakonia* as represented in theology refers to the service, serving and caring. The church is often criticized for its judgment about the actions of others, while doing very little to help the hurting. Jesus, the Son of God, came as a man, bled and died, not for "souls", but for people. His redemptive act redeemed the whole person.

It is precisely this narrow view of ministry that makes reaching the residents of underserved urban communities so difficult. When someone is hungry, or is suffering from economic or racial injustices, it is difficult for them to hear a message of God loves you, get saved or you're going to hell. Even the scriptures, particularly the New Testament, present a different image of God and the message preached by His Son and emissaries. Luke's account records Jesus' mission statement and consequently, that of His Body's, "the Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."⁸⁷ It is with this statement read by Jesus that we can find proof-positive of the servant role of the church. The true church will care for the hurting, infirmed, imprisoned. As Villafane wrote, "the Spirit's love constrains us to feed the hungry, visit the sick and prisoners, shelter the homeless and poor – to express God's love in social concerns. We do this as an expression of faithful obedience and authentic spirituality."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Lk. 4:18-19 NIV.

⁸⁸ Villafane, *Seek the Peace*, 14.

Obviously, within the context of urban ministry, the need for a serving church trumps the church of religious orders. A church that is made alive through the incarnation will be concerned about others – even those who do not and may never call upon the Name of God, through Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus came to save the whole world, not just those of His tribe, the missional church will have a world-view focus as well. Therefore, the challenge we are presented with is, how do we move a church with traditional Sunday morning church values, to be one that is critically engaged in the lives of the community? It is my strong opinion that if we are to change how we “do” theology, then we must first change what we think about God, His reign and His will for humanity.

The small, intimate gatherings of PTU can create a more caring attitude for others; either others within the group, or by learning about our role as caretakers for those outside the commonwealth. It provides an opportunity for shared vision, personal mastery and team learning. And in this case, the stated objective would be serving humanity. PTU then becomes the classroom where the mind and heart are reformatted to embrace “true religion”.

The urban church must develop a legitimate form of **Leitourgia**, which can express adoration to God while doing so in a language that is culturally inviting. To conduct worship in any form that is not in the cultural language of the people, would have the same benefit as if someone were to describe a beautiful place in a language that you neither speak nor write. Relevant ministry produces relevant *leitourgia*. Again, insisting that the whole person being addressed with the whole Gospel, this would undoubtedly include *leitourgia*. *Leitourgia* should be taught at the earliest of ages,

hopefully from parents and reinforced by spiritual training; teaching both by precept and example.

At the heart of *Leitorugia* is a Church being “worship” not just doing worship. It speaks of a Church that confesses, celebrates and worships the Prince of Peace.⁸⁹ This display of adoration is not done for public viewing. It is the consistent, extravagant demonstration of ‘adoration’ that is the witnesses to the community-at-large.

Developing a Kingdom Mentality

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God...”⁹⁰ John’s first message was about the Kingdom of God. Jesus’ first message was about the Kingdom of God. It was not about church. It was not about politics from a Greek nor a Jewish perspective. He announced and inaugurated a new Kingdom. It was and is still a radical message. It causes trouble within the halls of the Roman Empire and today still creates much rumblings in both the religious and secular reaches of society. The idea that we are to function on this planet as a Kingdom-people rather than a democracy is radical and viewed as heretical. The multiplicity of philosophers who proposed various forms of controversial governmental structures– socialism, communism, fascism etc., all would be eclipsed by the revolutionary and inflammatory message of the Kingdom of God, namely repentance.

The PTU embraces as its core value the spreading of the doctrine of the Kingdom of God in and throughout the *ecclesia*. Everything we read in the New Testament was discussed in the light of the backdrop of Kingdom theology. From marriage and divorce to sowing and reaping, and love and forgiveness – all has its vibrant expression in the

⁸⁹ Notes from lecture given by Dr. Eldin Villafane during Residency 2, June 9, 2005

⁹⁰ Matt. 6:33. NAS

Kingdom of God. It would appear, and further research would support, that the modern church has little understanding of Kingdom theology in practice or theory. For instance, the introduction into the Christian faith is often preceded by the message of “you must be born-again.” How true this is. However, the Born-again experience is a portal through which one could see and enter into the Kingdom. It was not an end in and of itself. It was not an ordained right of passage into the church, but the unavoidable prerequisite to experience the Kingdom of God. To further complicate matters, *metanoia* – the changing of the mind – is the switch that turns on the light to experience the invisible Kingdom, a road that is not often traveled.

The PTU model is designed to take the seeds of Kingdom theology and embed them systematically in the soil of the human heart with the hope of producing lasting fruit that nourishes every aspect of a person’s life. Given the urgency of the hour in which we live, it does not seem practical to have anything but rapid change. However, the process of making disciples is slow, tedious, gradual and methodical. In the age of mega-ministries and superstar pontificators, I believe we have lost sight of the art of making disciples, let alone becoming disciples ourselves. We have been trained, albeit unintentionally, to listen or to endure sermons. As pulpiteers, we have mastered the art of two and three-hour long religious services in which a hired group of well-meaning believers preaches to us, sings to us and pray for us. There is very little demand on the part of the hearer to do much more than respond with well placed amen. Compliance, in this case, is not necessarily heart-obedience, or is it discipleship. Large gatherings, celebratory activities have a place, especially within our present “entertain me” cultural climate. Growth, as determined through ‘warehousing’ scriptural information rather than

by the application of such knowledge is a poor indicator of health. Our world is not much better for having the church in it.

Worship in the city has many benefits. Worship has been traditionally portrayed in the contemporary society as a personal act toward God only. Rarely, if ever, is *Leitourgia* seen as having any horizontal or societal impact whatsoever. This present generation, which ‘knows not God’, is oblivious to the original intent and meaning of worship.

The power of worship in the city is undervalued. It is this devotion which singles out believer’s from non-believers. What or who a person is devoted to, determines to what they give worship. From the consistent act of attending a regular, pre-appointed worship service, to public displays of worship in common community areas, worship is outward expression of an inward belief. The more private display of worship, such as personal reading and prayer times, also communicates to others the significance of one’s relationship to the invisible God. Just as a person’s checkbook register reveals on what someone spends their money, so is the case with a person’s time. If you were to look at a believer’s weekly planner, would there be scheduled time with God and for God? In a very real sense, the “genius” of keeping the Sabbath Holy was that it communicated to the uncircumcised the priority God’s people placed on worship. The postmodern Christian church has no such witness.

Teaching as Jesus' primary objective

“For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”⁹¹ One of the most used titles for the Lord in the New Testament is that of teacher. Teacher appears to be the title of choice above, redeemer, healer and even savior. This could infer that the mission most needed and coveted was that of teachers – someone to introduce a new way of being and doing. The verb to “teach” appears 34 times, teacher 4 times and the word “taught” appears no less than 42 times in the New Testament.

As discussed beforehand in the section regarding a Kingdom Mentality, the case is made that this new mentality and therefore life-style would only be the result of systematic application of new truths, namely centered on the Kingdom of God. From a young age, Jesus “argued the torah” with those in the synagogue.⁹² Jesus is viewed as a revolutionary by some, and by others a radical historical figure, and still others as a very influential but yet delusional character. However, as in the case of countless people who walked this earth since the time of Jesus, He would be less than memorable if it were not for the radical nature of His message and its diametrical opposition to that of His contemporaries.

Similarly, throughout Old Testament particularly and especially in relationship to Israel, the ‘ways of God’ were to be taught didactically, intentionally and constantly. This same theme is further suggested in the twenty-seven books that comprise the New Testament. Statements made by most of the Biblical authors, starting with Jesus and ending with John on the Island of Patmos, all point to the need to think differently about life, death, money, love, sin, sickness and so forth. In essence, the Bible is the primary

⁹¹ Mt. 7:29. NAS

⁹² Lk. 2:49. NAS

tool for the mystical, but yet quantifiable process of *metanoia*. Jesus' first sermon lesson to masses can be captured in the statement, repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.⁹³ In other words, change your mind, shift the way you think. *Metanoia* happens primarily and systematically through a pedagogical process. Jesus taught us the necessity of being taught, for without the learning of a new paradigm, the Kingdom which Jesus proclaimed to be within reach would eternally elude us.

In addition, the change of the mind cannot be measured in terms of meters or yard. For how can you measure thought? In actuality, the only way you can measure the degree of change in the mind is by the corresponding actions that it produces. John the Baptist called it fruit in keeping with repentance. This change cannot be determined through a standardized test. To possess the ability to answer correctly a series of questions, is not necessarily learning. For the purpose of this work and the ultimate goal of the PTU is to develop believers in such a manner as to be able to apply the scriptures properly to their complex lives.

From a Hebrews' perspective, one gains a different and arguably a more complete idea of 'teaching'. The Hebrew word, *yarah* – translated teach in Leviticus 10:11, equates the process of teaching, to shooting an arrow at a predetermined target, or to flow as directly and naturally as rain water. Consequently, God's method of learning His precepts was through systematic teaching methods with predetermining objectives:

You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates; so that you are days and the days of your sons may be multiplied on the land, which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens remain above the earth. For if you are careful to keep all this

⁹³ Matt 4:17. NAS

commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him... ⁹⁴

The average believer makes no serious distinction between Heaven and the Kingdom. Most seem to simply move past the numerous references to the Kingdom of God and Heaven and attempt to apply the teachings with a democratic and secular understanding. The PTU seeks to take life's issues, topics and themes and sift them through Kingdom theology as taught by the Teacher. This will attempt to address the conflict many believers experience because of hearing New Testament truth, i.e., Kingdom principles, but not know how to make application.

Engagement: Believer's Role in the Earth

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.⁹⁵

The reference for the believer being salt and light in the earth has become a popular cliché. However, how are we to become and more importantly remain salt and bright? The PTU recaptures the learning community in which the constant flow of Biblical information renews the mind and spirit of the participant. As Dr. Eldin Villafane points out in his book, *Seek the Peace of the City* – the believer must be critically engaged in the society in which he/she lives. However, this engagement must be more than involvement or participatory. To be effective or to effect and advance the concept of *shalom*, the believer not only must be different from the community they are affecting, but must also think differently. This must be going beyond a mental assent or an

⁹⁴ Deut. 11:19-22. NAS

⁹⁵ Matthew 5:13-14. NAS

intellectual summation. This “differently” implies operating one’s affairs from a perspective that is many times diametrically opposed to the current culture. This challenge to think and be different further supports the need for a medium to introduce and interject Kingdom laced seeds into the lives of would be followers of the Master. The PTU is that vehicle.

Few would argue with the premise that a Christian’s life and life-style should be different from a non-Christian. In what ways should it be different? How does this difference come about? What role does the church and church attendance make toward arriving at ‘being different’? This difference is not automatically achieved by going to church or even by being born-again for that matter. The parallelism between natural birth and spiritual birth gives further credence to this point. When a child is born, it has at birth, the bones, muscle tissue and organs necessary that make it human. No one would argue, that much of the success which the child may achieve in life, is directly proportionate to how, and what that child learns, the environment in which he/she develops, not to mention nutrition and relationships. The PTU, in this analogy, works very much like a nursery where spiritual growth is nurtured through a steady diet of essential information, opportunity for application, formal and informal relationships with family members. This is, for the most part, markedly different then how most church gatherings function. The intent is for such growth to occur; the PTU applies best practices that foster spiritually healthy, age-appropriate development.

The evidence of appropriate developmental growth is measured in the ability of the students to successfully apply the information learned while attending the PTU. Satisfying the basic requirements of a syllabus and class attendance is only the beginning

to healthy growth. Knowing and doing are inseparable for sustentative development to occur.

Discipleship Making: The Mission of the Church

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.⁹⁶

How does a church determine its effectiveness? What is success in the church business? What is the litmus test for a church? The gospel according to Saint Matthew reveals a very succinct mandate given to the followers in Jesus' day and is still relevant today. This mandate is to make disciples within all ethnic groups. The emphasis is clearly not on building the biggest church facility or amassing the largest Sunday morning crowd. Nor is the emphasis on the creation of institutions or organizations. Although it is expedient to have significant numbers of followers and a supportive base in the form of an organization, it was not the focus of the ministry of Jesus or the cornerstone of His message. The focus was on the development of disciplined learners, who were able to reproduce themselves in a like manner, consistent with the mission of the Founder of the Church.

At the very heart of the PTU is the creation of learners, learners of Biblical truth and proportion. It is very evident in many corners of our nation and in certain parts of the world that the gathering of individuals to hear sermons is routinely accomplished. How many followers or disciples are "made" because of these gatherings? What is often

⁹⁶ Matt 28:18-20. NAS

reported is attendance – how many families actually attend a Sunday morning service. What is not meaningfully reported are disciples, the families who are carrying on the work of Jesus Christ.

The PTU is designed in a-matter-of-fact way to foster the learning and application of principles. It will not appear to be a church growth event. However, true growth cannot be measured by weekly attendance figures, but in the maturation of those in attendance. Just as in nature, a mature fruit-bearing tree will produce fruit and reproduce itself in time, so will believers reproduce themselves in time as they learn of Him.

Empowerment: Chief Responsibility of Leadership

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.⁹⁷

The above referenced scripture serves as the job description for the clergy. It clearly presents both the challenge as well as the privilege of leadership. In much of the urban church culture, however, the emphasis is on the role of the pastor as the main progenitor of ministry. She or he is called upon to teach, nurture, visit the sick, be a community reformer, and administer the sacraments of the Church. The Apostle Paul's

⁹⁷ Eph. 4:11-16. NAS

words to the church at Ephesus are in direct contrast to this philosophy of ministry. The explanation that the Paul gives for the existence of the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers instructs on at least two matters. The first is the purpose for which these “Gifts” were given to the church. The second is a basic understanding as to why the “laity” is quantifiably ineffective.

It is in this text that the PTU finds one of its strongest theological allies. Ephesians 4: 11-12 states that the ‘work’ of the ministry is the responsibility of the body of believer’s and that the job of the pastor is to prepare them for such a noble work. In essence, the PTU is the environment for learning as well as the development of teachers. In order to successfully conduct this type of learning community, gifted and trained biblically versed teachers are essential. No pastoral staff could accomplish this task effectively because of the sheer number of classes being proposed. PTU is a magnet for those willing to offer their gifts and expertise to the advancement of the Kingdom of God. It also affords an intelligent means of providing for gift discovery and acknowledgement of such gifts within the local church. While Sunday school teachers are more common, the call for PTU teachers and practitioners is the greatest need within the church today.

A Theology of Biblical Repentance: *Metanoia* within the Life of the Local Church

The essence of the PTU is the changing of how people think. In Biblical terminology, the word repent includes the idea and is generously expressed throughout the New Testament. The Greek language expresses the meanings of repentance to include a change in one’s behavior but emphasizes a radical adjustment in the mental model of the person. *Metanoia*, the Greek word for repentance means to shift or to have a different

mind and is employed twenty five times in the New Testament.⁹⁸ To more fully highlight the necessity of *metanoia*, the changing of the mind, as the essential element of true transformation, it is helpful to examine the other ways to which the term “repentance and repent” refers.

1. Repent "to be Careful" or "to be concerned with": The feeling indicated by the word may issue in genuine repentance, or it may degenerate into mere remorse (Matt 21:29, 32; 27:3). Judas repented only in the sense of regret, remorse, and not in the sense of the abandonment of sin. The word is used with reference to Paul's feeling concerning a certain course of conduct, and with reference to God in His attitude toward His purposes of grace (2 Cor. 7:8 the King James Version; Heb 7:21).⁹⁹

2. Repent, "to turn over" "to Turn Upon," "to turn unto": The word *epistrepho* is used to bring out more clearly the distinct change wrought in repentance. It is employed quite frequently in Acts to express the positive side of a change involved in New Testament repentance, or to indicate the return to God of which the turning from sin is the negative aspect. The two conceptions are inseparable and complementary. The word is used to express the spiritual transition from sin to God (Acts 9:35; 1 Thess 1:9); to strengthen the idea of faith (Acts 11:21); and to complete and emphasize the change required by New Testament repentance (Acts 26:20).¹⁰⁰

What is also noteworthy is the difficulty experienced when ‘repentance’ is translated into other languages. Because the Latin version renders repentance as the ‘exercise of penitence’ it thus carries the connotation of pain, grief, distress, rather than a change of thought and purpose.¹⁰¹ The emphasis on penitence encourages grief over sin as the main ideas associated the repentance and therefore relegating the “New Testament concept of repentance, shifting of the mind, in the background if not altogether out of the picture.”¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Bryon H. Dement, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Electronic Database*, (Washington: Bible Soft, 1996).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

The Biblical concept of repentance has wide application. As repentance is viewed through lenses of other disciplines the depth of its power and influence over a person's life can not be over-stated. It is precisely for this reason that both Jesus of Nazareth and John the Baptist inaugurate their ministries with the simple, but yet profound message of repentance.¹⁰³

The Psychological Elements of Repentance

1. The Intellectual Element: Repentance is that change of a person's thought process which in turn causes a change in his or her behavior. This need to change is so deep that it radically affects the entire personality and reason for existence. The discipline of "Psychology shows repentance to be profound, personal and all-pervasive. The intellectual element is manifest from the nature of man as an intelligent being, and from the demands of God who desires only rational service. Man must comprehend sin as unutterably heinous, the divine law as perfect and inexorable, and himself as coming short or falling below the requirements of a Holy God" (Job 42:5-6; Ps 51:3; Rom 3:20).¹⁰⁴

2. The Emotional Element: This aspect of repentance recognizes "there may be knowledge of sin without turning from it as an awful thing which dishonors God and ruins man. The change of view may lead only to a dread of punishment and not to the hatred and abandonment of sin" (Ex 9:27; Num 22:34; Josh 7:20; 1 Sam 15:24; Matt

¹⁰³ Mt. 3:2; 4:17. NAS

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

27:4).¹⁰⁵ An emotional element is a requirement for repentance, however, true repentance will ultimately affect one's feelings regarding sin, self and the Sovereignty of God.

3. The Volitional Element: The volitional aspect or element of repentance is arguably the most important. Given the fact that humanity has a "free will" to acknowledge the Lordship of their Creator, the necessity of choosing to repent is central. This experience of the believer is expressed in the:

Old Testament by "turn", or "return," and in the New Testament by "repent" or "turn." The words employed in the Hebrew and Greek place chief emphasis on the will, the change of mind, or of purpose, because a complete and sincere turning to God involves both the apprehension of the nature of sin and the consciousness of personal guilt (Jer. 25:5; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38; 2 Cor. 7:9-10). The demand for repentance implies free will and individual responsibility.¹⁰⁶

The will of human-kind is the key to spiritual life and death. Repentance is a choice given to us by our creator. "Not material sacrifice, but a spiritual change, is the inexorable demand of God in both dispensations (Ps 51:17; Isa 1:11; Jer 6:20; Hos 6:6)."¹⁰⁷ The Biblical concept of repentance is often used in the context of sinful behavior that if not amended will incur the wrath of God. Notwithstanding this truism, a broader perspective of repentance is also applicable. Given the general meaning of the term *metanoia*, repentance then also applies to any thought that is contrary to the mind of God as expressed in the Holy Scriptures. This has application in every dimension of human behavior and endeavor. Repentance is a crucial criterion necessary to experience the Kingdom of God (Matt 3:2; 4:17). In these particular instances, Matthew 3:2; 4:17, neither Jesus our Lord or John the Baptist specified exactly what the listeners should

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

repent of. One conclusion that could be drawn from this omission was the totality of their mental model which demanded *metanoia*, not a specific behavior. It is with this understanding that the PTU finds its motivation. By concluding that our entire life, as shaped by this present age, needs to be amended significantly and in many cases abandoned completely, embracing the repentance from this perspective should be welcomed rather than feared.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN AND INITIAL FINDINGS

Purpose and Project Construction

My intent was to create a university of practical spiritual education. The PTU has been in existence, in name, and to a lesser degree of function, since 2001. I have conducted topical or practical Bible based Studies that were designed to look and feel more like a fireside chat. Financial literacy courses ranging from budgeting, investing and credit repair to more linear spiritual classes such as spiritual gifts and purpose discovery were held. In just two years (2003-2005) over 500 believers' have attended similar courses. However, the design and implementation of these courses was the by-product of a small group.

The central aspect of this paper is the creation of dynamic learning clusters designed to teach a usable spirituality under the heading of the PTU. The foundation of the PTU is within the local church setting and context. Thus, this project was developed with local church cooperation and support. Although the local church is the primary user, the ultimate beneficiary will be the community at-large. This is in concert with the words of the Prophet Jeremiah as the welfare of the city is the goal.¹⁰⁸ It is not an attempt to uncover all the problems experienced within the local church. The scope for this project, therefore, is be limited to the subject of discipleship within the church that I have been privileged to serve for over seven years at the time of this project. The PTU will be the chief instrument utilized by the local church to increase the biblical knowledge and

¹⁰⁸ Jer. 29:4-7. NAS

application of principles in the life of the average church-goer. The classes were suggested by 'users', therefore increases the likelihood of higher participation.

Boundaries are important for the development and success of the PTU. A fully developed PTU, well integrated into the life and ongoing function of the local church, will affect by design every other aspect of the church. Its purpose is to systematically influence every dimension of a believer's life and consequently by default affect the church and the society at large.

As an attempt to produce a more comprehensive curriculum and more meaningful outcomes, I enlisted the involvement of a few members of the congregation with advance degrees – in education and science. A small group worked for weeks to develop five classes that, in their opinion, they felt would benefit membership. These classes, spiritual in nature, were modeled after classical pedagogy. However, the process of developing these courses paled in comparison to the Hexagon Technique later employed and the team-learning approach. For example, the diversity of classes is a direct by-product of the collective input gathered through the exercise.

Although the purpose of this project was to design a PTU, the result had a far more important impact. For example, it clearly demonstrated the need for team learning within the local church context. This critical "unintended" consequence will have an immediate impact on the entire organization. Furthermore, it produced a greater awareness of the complexity of vision and amount of effort required to change or increase the effectiveness of just one ministry, not to mention the entire organization.

Lastly, a deeper and more meaningful fellowship came about as a result of their working together as a team. Participants were encouraged to share their ideas in a

forgiving and encouraging atmosphere. This is in direct contrast to what I had previously done to institute a new ministry in the church. The integration of a new ministry into the ongoing life of the church is usually achieved through a top-down approach and unilaterally. The proposed new ministry would be injected into the church structure, rather than integrated or assimilated. The ministry leaders and workers would have input but primarily on a cosmetic or pragmatic level. Very rarely, would there be lengthy discussions to elicit the myriad of responses and ideas that are common within the Hexagon Technique. On some level, the outcome or the 'product' looks the same - a course or courses were designed, logistics discussed, teacher criteria established, but the multidimensional analysis of the impact of would-be programs is absent, as well as the intrinsic value of team building. Whereas, in the Hexagon Technique, the challenges and opportunities are discovered and examined in the planning stages and the potentially unintended consequences are routinely observed beforehand.

Project Development and Philosophy

This paper was completed in three phases: (1) a critique of the existing PTU concept as it existed prior to the first doctoral residency; (2) Hexagon exercise of distinct groups which would result in, (3) course selection and development.

The PTU project speaks to an immediate need within the church for a creative and relevant means of discipleship. However, this paper addresses the larger systemic question and problem: How to move a local assembly from an inwardly focused group, toward a newly empowered entity critically engaged in the affairs of the city to which it has been called. The presupposition is that the great need in the world is the same within

the local church. This premise finds its base in that the world and church are made up of people, the very same people. What separates people is what they know, or as the case maybe do not know. What differentiates the ‘world’ and people of the church is a thorough and practical Biblical education that leads to authentic ‘metanoia’.

The word education is of Latin origin and it means to train, to lead out or to bring up.¹⁰⁹ This definition has direct application for the needs represented within the Lord’s church. There is a remarkable difference between providing information and that of truly educating. The clear purpose of biblical education then is to train, lead and rear people in the ways of God, not to simply inform through endless sermons. It is the Word of God that has the ability to transform the life of anyone subjected to it. The writer of the letter of Hebrews, as well as the words of the Apostle Paul, speaks of the word of God being the force that influences the inner thoughts or the sub-conscience.¹¹⁰

Starting at ground zero, pejoratively speaking, as the world goes, so does the church: The lesser (present world system) influencing the greater (the Church) or the inferior usurping authority over the superior. If we, as believers, are going to positively influence the world, then we must use God’s instrument for change, namely the local church.

Given the lethargic condition of the local church as a whole, it must undergo an intentional, radical and systematic metanoia for it to become the undeniable change agent depicted in Scriptures.¹¹¹ It needs to move from its present level of literacy and practice to one that is biblically infused and energized. This is accomplished by the integration and development of a learning community, sustained by learning teams. This learning

¹⁰⁹ Oxford American Dictionary, 2nd ed.

¹¹⁰ Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 4:12-16. NAS

¹¹¹ Eph. 3:9-11. NAS

community needs to understand its role on the world stage of transformation. The idea of a place, namely the PTU, is not to be another event for Christians to get their ‘emotional’ needs met. Although, receiving personal benefit for participating is a logical outcome, it is not the result envisioned in the Word of God. The final product is a society informed and transformed by the presence of Kings and Priests of the Most High God. This will not occur through prayer meetings and church services alone. The PTU, as with any viable learning system, should prepare its students to be meaningfully engaged in the society in which it must live. The graduates must be fully present more than just spectators. As Andrew Davey writes, a “Christians presence in the urban world needs to speak the truth of what is happening as it struggles to create communities and networks that are active as laying new foundations as part of the healing, redeeming and transformation of those cities.”¹¹²

Methodology: Two Hexagon Exercises

Why Two Separate Hexagon Exercises?

The need for two Hexagon exercises comes out of the idea that learning is progressive. The first exercise, initiated within the first year of the residency reflects cursory understanding of the process. However, the second group was completed during the actual writing phase of this paper and reflects a more thorough understanding of the concept. For the sake of brevity, I have produced Causal Loop diagrams for the second group only. By conducting these exercises, the fact that learning is a process is demonstrated.

¹¹² Davey, *Urban Christianity*, 124.

Project Design: Hexagon Group One: Fifteen members of the Cathedral of Life Christian Assembly were selected to participate in the Hexagon Technique exercise as an integral part of this project. This took place on a Sunday afternoon, December 2004. The group was charged with completing the exercise on the basis of three pertinent questions relative to the establishment of a Practical Truth University in an already existing urban church. The questions were:

1. What hindrances exist to applying the teachings of the Bible?
2. How do we implement a Practical Truth University into the mainstream life of the local church?
3. What topics and subjects are important in developing a meaningful relationship with Christ?

The criterion used to select the participants was basic. Each person had to be a member of the Cathedral of Life for at least a year, 18 years of age or older, and available for this exercise for the date and time chosen. Furthermore, they had to be able to participate the entire duration of the exercise, which lasted five hours.

The participants engaged were diverse in ethnicity, age, Christian life experience and geographical residence. These individuals were chosen intentionally with these factors in mind. Additionally, the participants were chosen for their *lack* of knowledge of the PTU concept, thus ensuring a fresher perspective regarding the necessary components for successfully designing a program.

Project Design: Hexagon Group Two: In Hexagon Group Two, Six members of the professional staff of the Cathedral of Life were selected to participate. In addition to the fact that group two was engaged after the third Residency and the participants were employees responsible for implementing the proposed program, the group was asked one question as opposed to three. Question: what are the opportunities and challenges to incorporating a Practical Truth University into an existing urban ministry?

The participating groups followed the agenda outlined below:

- I. Brief on purpose of exercise
- II. Explanation of the Hexagon Technique –
- III. Group Work ----- Selection of Groups
- IV. Brainstorming ----- Factoring
- V. Arranging ----- Ordering
- VI. Grouping ----- Clustering
- VII. Relational Ideas ----- Interconnecting
- VIII. Re-Working/Wording the Ideas ----- Reconfiguring
- IX. Categorizing ----- Prioritizing
- X. Debriefing ----- Review*

*A standard Hexagon process does not require a debriefing session

A Biblical Narrative for the Practical Truth University

And great multitudes followed Him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan. And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And opening His mouth He began to teach them, saying...¹¹³

The scripture model for the PTU can be found in several New Testament references. For instance, the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, Paul's words in Romans 12:1-2, and lastly in Ephesians 4:8-11, all address the need for learning. There is an unmistakable emphasis on applying truth in order to facilitate metanoia as the unavoidable prerequisite to personal and corporate maturity in all three of the above referenced texts. Of course, I dedicate much more exposition to developing the theological understanding and basis for the PTU in chapter three. For the sake of brevity, however, I will focus my attention on the Sermon on the Mount. Nevertheless, this narrative reflects the essence of and a justification for, the PTU as an organic tool to tease out the complex truths that Jesus taught, and to find functional application of the same to lives of believers.

The closing statements of Matthew, chapter four and the first two verses in chapter five speak to the heart and aspirations of our Lord. He saw the multitudes... disciples came... He opened His mouth and began to teach (Matthew 4-5). This is a very succinct view of the PTU. There are multitudes of people that are desirous of learning more about the teachings of the Master. Teachings that, for the most part, are not readily available during Sunday morning worship services. Jesus' first act toward the larger community was not an invitation to a worship service, nor was it a speech of condemnation. He announced a new order, the Kingdom of God (Matthew 4:17). Jesus

¹¹³ Matt. 4:25-5:2 NAS

then instructed His followers on the differences between their present way of doing and being and the Kingdom way. He covered topics that were germane to their earthly and eternal lives, such as persecution, being a witness, righteousness, the Law and Prophets, love, economic development, political relationships, relationship and so forth. Although His Words were not presented in a systematic theology, they were nevertheless topically specific and practically relevant. These topics and many more will serve as the core curricula of the PTU.

The Challenge and Opportunity of Team Learning

As is well known, developing teams intentionally requires a great deal of effort. The process of building and implementing the Practical Truth University yielded very predictable challenges. The process used to start the foundational work of team building is called the Hexagon Technique, which is different than brainstorming. The challenges and benefits of instituting this new approach to information gathering provided a broader understanding of the necessity of team building. I observed in both control groups the five stages of team formation.

The *forming stage* involves sharing of common life issues, employment matters, learning of the ‘team’ goal. The second stage is *storming*. According to Dr. John Lombardi, this is the conflict stage. In this stage the teams “ability to work it (conflict) through becomes critical to its survival.”¹¹⁴ The next stage, *norming* is when the team “understands and accepts the overall vision and the means to achieve it.”¹¹⁵ In the fourth stage the group starts *performing*. There is a greater sense of team-work and

¹¹⁴ John Lombardi, “Jesus Led a Team”. This unpublished manuscript illustrated the stages which any team in its developmental phases experiences. 2004. p. 4

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 5.

interdependence. The final stage, *ending*, is the time when the team realizes their initial reason for gathering is coming to an end. “The team needs to recognize when it is time to do and needs to do the appropriate celebrating for their accomplishments and grieving over their separation.”¹¹⁶ These five stages were very evident in both Hexagon groups. What is also noteworthy is that these stages are unavoidable in groups working on any project for an extended period of time. Knowing this reality better prepares the leader for the unique factors that impact the overall team performance and ministry.

The process of Hexagoning is a challenging learning experience. By design, the process is to elicit responses to specific questions that in the final analysis will provide the practitioner with valuable information relative to the feasibility of their proposed objective. Still another outcome of the Hexagoning experience was the realization of how many other ways one objective could be approached. Utilizing the input of other team members gives much needed breadth to what otherwise would have been by default a narrow perspective.

Tables 1 and 2 are representations of the many ways to address a question. Similar to the goal of PTU, the Hexagoning process capitalizes on the strength of collective wisdom. The responses listed in both Tables are the possible practical realities which, more than likely, will be experienced in the implementation of PTU into an existing urban church context. The corresponding Illustrations show the systemic impact that is realized with executing the PTU. Thus rudimentary examples demonstrate the practical outworking of the theory of this new pedagogical approach to learning. In a nutshell, PTU takes theology proper and reduces it to principles for immediate assimilation into the life of the congregant.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 5.

Table 1

Hexagon responses to the question: What are the opportunities and challenges to incorporating a Practical Truth University into an existing urban church context?

1. Childcare needs
2. Personal benefits/motivations
3. Different value regarding education
4. Various abilities to learn
5. Location costs
6. Transportation to and from class
7. Personal priorities
8. Space limitations
9. Fellowship opportunities
10. Networking opportunities
11. Material costs
12. Accountability
13. Teacher's availability
14. Personal material/book costs
15. Personal growth opportunities
16. Language barriers
17. Education levels
18. Continued education credits
19. Learning opportunities for target audience
20. Identify our market
21. Marketing costs
22. Church growth
23. Decreased funds for general operation
24. Increased work for staff
25. Measurable outcomes
26. Available times
27. Program days
28. Program duration
29. Costs
30. Community benefits
31. Education opportunities
32. Community participation
33. Personal fears
33. Learning styles
35. Skill level of teachers
37. Family conflicts
38. Specialized ministry to children with learning disabilities
39. Communication among churches

Hexagon Responses (continued)

- 40. Multiple locations/sites for classes
- 42. Accreditation
- 43. Community credibility
- 44. Community visibility
- 45. Strategic plan
- 46. On-line course
- 47. Opportunity for furthering education
- 48. Doctrinal differences
- 49. Website development
- 50. Creates additional tools for discipleship
- 51. Leadership development
- 52. Potential decrease in mid-week attendance
- 53. Potential decrease in children and youth attendance
- 54. Course development
- 55. Teacher/staff development

Table 2

Hexagon clusters response to the question: What are the opportunities and challenges to incorporating a Practical Truth University into an existing urban church context?

A. Impact on Student Participation

1. Childcare needs
2. Personal benefits/motivations
3. Different value regarding education
4. Various abilities to learn
6. Transportation to and from class
7. Personal priorities
12. Accountability
14. Cultural conflicts
15. Language barriers
16. Education levels
17. Personal growth opportunities
18. Personal growth
34. Personal fears
38. Family conflicts

B. Impact on Church Operations and Programs

8. Space limitations
9. Fellowship opportunities
22. Church growth
24. Increased work for staff
38. Specialized ministry to children with learning disabilities
50. Creates additional tools for discipleship
51. Leadership development
52. Potential decrease in mid-week attendance
53. Potential decrease in children and youth attendance

C. Community Outreach Impact

10. Networking
30. Community Benefits
31. Education opportunities
32. Community Participation
39. Communication among churches
42. Accreditation
43. Community credibility
44. Community visibility
46. On-line course
47. Opportunity for furthering education

Hexagon Responses (continued)

D. Program Logistical Impact

- 13. Teacher's availability
- 17. Continued education credits
- 19. Learning opportunities for target audience
- 20. Identify our market
- 25. Measurable outcomes
- 26. Available tunes
- 27. Program days
- 28. Program duration
- 35. Skill level of teachers
- 45. Strategic plan
- 54. Course development
- 55. Teacher/staff development

E. Financial Impact on the Church

- 5. Location costs
- 11. Material costs
- 14. Increased personal costs
- 21. Marketing costs
- 23. Decreased funds for general operation
- 49. Website development

Illustration 1

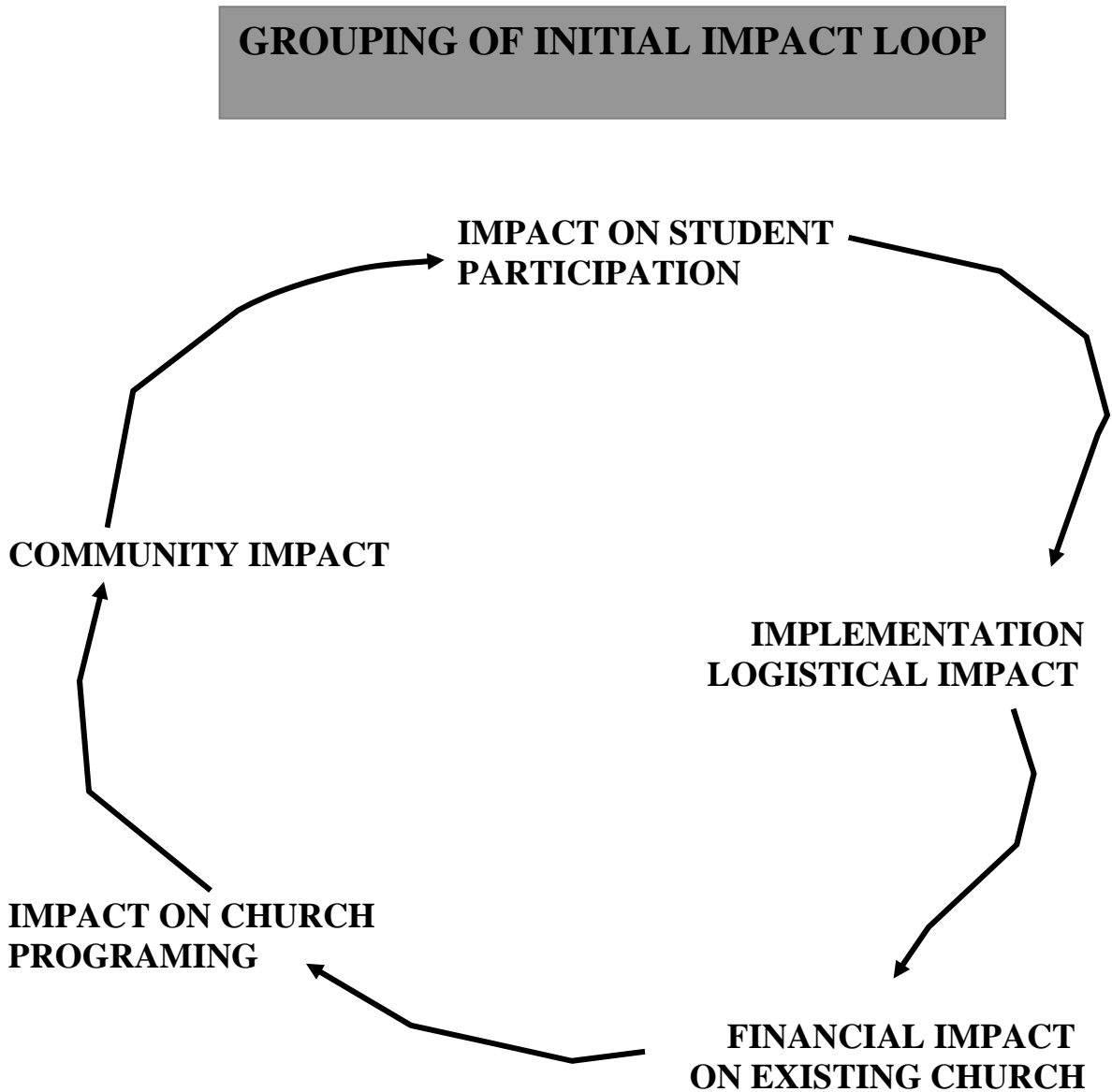
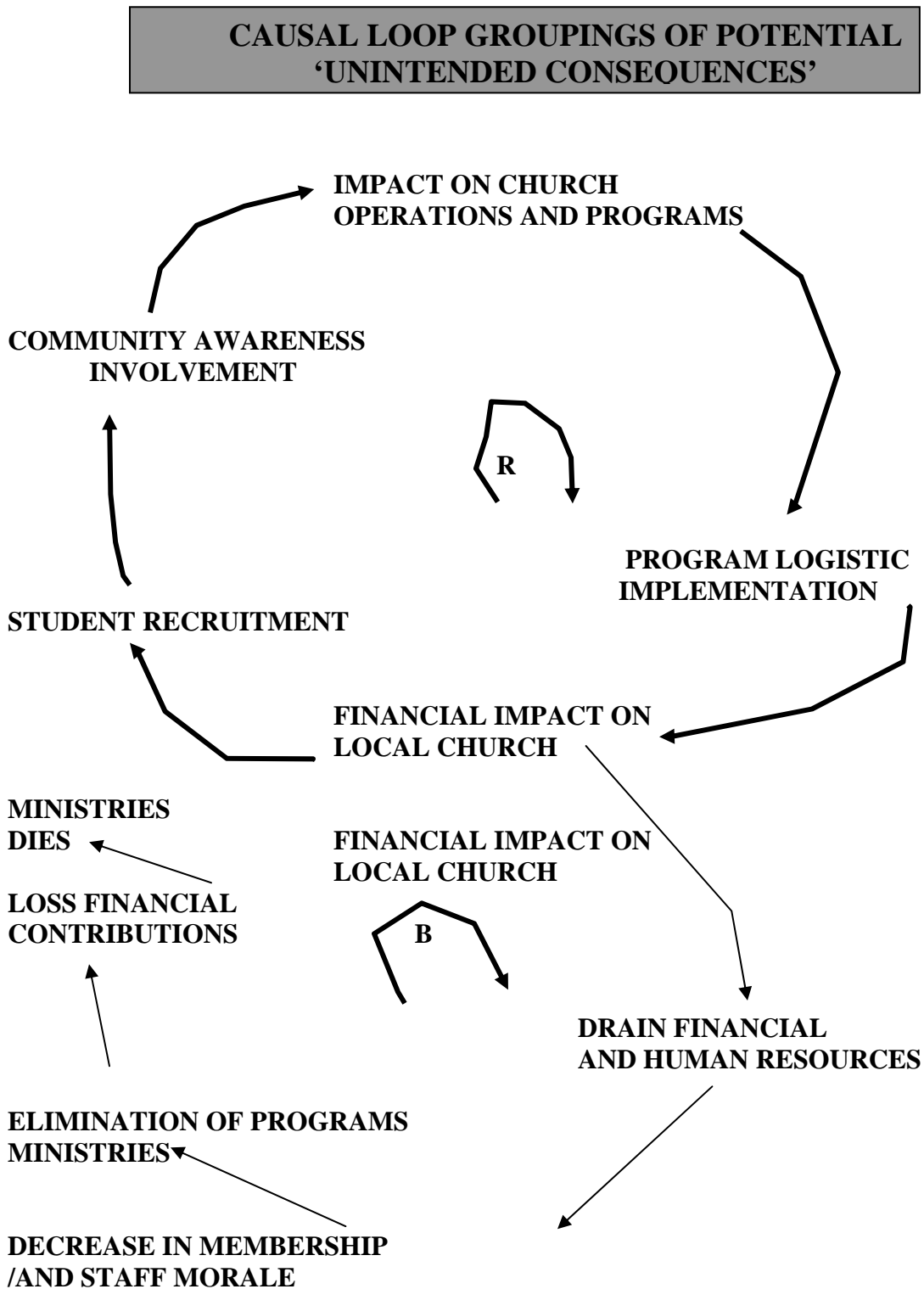


Illustration 2



In summary, my former approach to program development centered on the idea of one person or a very small group. The results of such are the creation of near-sighted project that failed to accommodate in any meaningful way the unintended consequences, which are inevitable. It further ignores the opportunity to galvanize and marshal the membership and potential end-users of the program, thus ignoring the necessary shared vision for the sustained support. The new approach, using the Hexagon Technique harnesses the synergy of a larger group in a thorough process. Although in the Hexagon session three questions were addressed, I choose the most relevant question to present in the form of graph. Both the implementers and end-users were integrally involved in the conception and development of the project. The results being a well thought out effort with passionate involvement from the people whom it affects the most. Truly, the process to develop and integrate a ministry such as the PTU was greatly enhanced by the Hexagon Technique. In essence, to plan and execute the PTU without Hexagoning would be the same as starting a building project but without first understanding the total cost and larger impact. If sustainable ministry is the goal, Hexagoning is a requirement not a luxury. Although I participated in a Hexagon process during the D. Min. Residency, I was not convinced that it was essential to developing a quality program or ministry. My experience, leadership style and personality make-up biased me toward producing products without too much regard for the process. The object was to get the job done. Although, by some standards of measurement of success there is fruit for my labor, more often than not, the results brought with it many unwanted unintended consequences that live on to this very day; Ishmaels that could have been avoided by employing the Hexagon Technique. By contrasting the committee approach to program development

verses the team learning, I discovered that one is greater than two. In other words, the synergy of one group thinking systemically can be more functional and dynamic than the best efforts of a committed group of two or more people. This revelation has broad implications regarding how future ministries are created, organized, implemented and integrated.

The need for learning clusters as the main educational vehicle is a commentary on the church's present-day philosophy of ministry. At the heart of the PTU lies the mission and commission of the church which is discipleship making. The fact that such a project is novel is a clear example of how far a field we have traveled from the undisputed mandate of Matthew 28:18-20. Pre and post discussions with the participants of the Hexagoning process further supported the need for the PTU. For the most part, their comments centered around how unusual it was to be thinking of how to apply the principles of the Word of God to "every area of their life". Somehow, new believers as well as the more seasoned saints, failed to realize that there could and should be intentionality to the application of the Bible to the issues of life.

Conducting a project of this magnitude would be more effective if more time were allotted to the design and implementation. Although the success of this project is realized through the experience of the Hexagon Technique with the participants chosen and their feedback; the information gleaned as a result. Another adjustment would be to further collaborate on the questions used in the Hexagon Technique. In order to gain a broader perspective regarding the type of courses that should be offered, youth participation is essential. The fact that participants under the age of eighteen were excluded from this project design was a major oversight. In order to produce a learning

vehicle that would be relevant to the generation in question, exploring their perspective is essential.

The adage that a journey is as important as the final destination finds application in this project. The value of the journey can be understood best in terms of it's implications on other ministries within the Cathedral. Through working with the participants of the Hexagoning process, it became evident that it is an indispensable element for the healthy creation of ministries. The need to systematically review existing ministries, in light of team learning cannot be over stated. The questions must be asked, what creative genius are we missing by not having collective wisdom? How much more effective would our ministries be if others were invited into the process of visioning, design and implementation? What negative unintended consequences could be avoided if a more thorough process of development were employed prior to a new project being inaugurated? Lastly, how much healthier and actualized would the Body of Christ be if their lives were Biblically aligned as learned through participation in the PTU? The value of the Hexagon Technique in developing ministries and the integration of learning clusters cannot be underestimated. These elements of change test the important theory that synergy is better than soliloquy and information leads to empowerment.

PART THREE: CONFRONTATION

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES, ANALYSIS, AND NEXT STEPS

In this chapter, the goal is to amalgamate the various segments of this paper by reviewing the original intent as well as the limitations that are inherent in any project. Additionally, the challenges, hindrances and discoveries will also be discussed. Special attention will be given to conclusions and possible next steps, such as how to introduce the concept of a PTU in a larger context. The greatest challenge that I faced in developing the PTU concept was the overwhelming desire to address and provide redress concerning all the dysfunctions evident within the local church, especially those dysfunctions in which their origin that can be traced back to the lack of focused pedagogy. Therefore, this paper is neither a treatise nor a magic bullet to fix all that breaks the heart of God about His Church. Its scope is limited to the local church, specifically the Cathedral of Life (the Cathedral) and the PTU's potential impact on the spiritual life of the church membership and as a the community at-large.

The original intent of this thesis-project

The unique purpose of this project, as outlined in chapter one, is to explore the need for a paradigm shift within the philosophy of Christian education of a local church, namely the Cathedral in Providence Rhode Island. Keeping with the spirit of this doctoral program, the project is based, in part, in current church practice and experience. The finished project, which is a clarion call for further research, study and practice, becomes a working document from which discussion and dialogue can continue.

The PTU was conceived out of my pastoral experiences of over twenty years of ministry. I was further motivated to find the most effective means of “changing” behavior due to my own personal struggles to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ.¹¹⁷ Although I have been following Christ intentionally since 1981, my spiritual growth seemed to be disjointed and disconnected. In essence, my knowledge of the Holy came by “drive-bys” during Sunday morning worship services. This is not meant as a disparaging commentary on the faithfulness of the pulpit ministry offered by the men and woman under whom I sat as a young believer. The problem, I later learned was the way in which I failed to apply the messages. The hundreds of sermons I have heard seemed to be biblically accurate regarding content and theology. The missing element is that both study and practice comprises the learning experience, not simply the hearing of information.¹¹⁸ PTU is a system of education that seeks to destroy “the illusion that the world is created of separate, unrelated forces.”¹¹⁹ Learning must be relevant, contextual, practical and personal.

The process of crafting the PTU with the Hexagon Technique unearthed several issues that illustrated very clearly the limitations of this pedagogical under-taking. The process forewarned me of the potential liabilities that awaited its implementation.

¹¹⁷ Rom. 8:29. NAS

¹¹⁸ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, p. XV

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 3.

1. Identification of ‘Qualified’ Teachers

The continuity and strength of the PTU is based upon its ability to attract teachers for the classes offered. The plan calls for the selection of individuals with a demonstrated knowledge of the subject to be discussed as well as a personal testimony of faith in Jesus Christ. Although it is true, that in the absence of a qualified teachers, an instructor with a working knowledge of subject matter may suffice. With the variety of courses offered (see Appendix 1) it has been a struggle to identify instructors with the knowledge and availability, especially on a pro bono basis.

2. Education Level of Students

The class makeup may range from those who are still in search of their Graduate Equivalency Diploma and those students with have already obtained advance degrees, as well as those who have various learning disabilities. This poses an additional challenge to the teaching staff and curriculum development. In short, the problem is how you keep a Master’s degree holder in business administration and a high school drop-out former ‘gang banger’ equally engaged at the same time.

3. Student Priorities

Classes should to be scheduled during times in which the majority of students can participate. Scheduling flexibility is critical to the success of the program. PTU is one of many priorities that need to be juggled by participants. Competing with careers, children and family schedules, and other church programs creates additional obstacles to enrollment.

Challenges and Hindrances in Changing Mental Models

The institution of any significantly different program or ministry into an already existing church reveals the depth of intellectual entrenchment. The status quo is too often preferred. The object of PTU is to provide a usable vehicle that would facilitate biblical repentance, *metanoia* that results in the alteration of mental models. Senge writes, “New insights fail to get put into practice because they conflict with deeply held internal images.”¹²⁰ To accomplish this task requires first an appreciation of the difficulty in changing how a person thinks. Mental models are fluid or “active, they shape how we act.”¹²¹ In constructing the framework of the PTU and inaugurating several classes, I have observed, first-hand the arduous task of mind renewal. There are several hindrances that were especially noteworthy:

1. Commitment to the Process

Each class, as presently designed is 4 to 6 weeks in duration. The Process of *metanoia* takes longer than the allotted time. However, the ability for a student to concentrate with intensity wanes after the third or fourth week.

2. Unconvinced of the need for change

Participant may not be fully convinced of their need for change. As previously stated, the understanding of the meaning of repentance is limited to behavioral adjustments.

Consequently, potential students only see the ‘obvious’ sinful activities that must be abandoned, with out appreciating rather than understanding the true insight of *metanoia*.

The result is demonstrated in the attitude of some potential students referring to these classes as ‘electives’ and ‘optional’.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 174.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 175.

3. Senior Pastor vs. Other Presenters

Congregants have demonstrated a preference of presenters. The challenge that is facing the full integration of the PTU is the fact that potential students often choose classes based upon who is teaching the class instead of the subject matter.

Key Issues of Program Implementation

There are many issues that could potentially hinder the implementation of PTU.

However, below I have highlighted only two that could have the most profound impact.

Scheduling

One problem that was identified was scheduling of classes within the overall church calendar. This problem would be non-existent if the PTU was part the initial vision of the church. This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that PTU is a pervasive system of education that permeates every area and program of church life. Consequently, when integrating PTU it will take precedent and influence every other area of the ministry.

Financial

Also indicated in the research phase of this program was the concern over the funding of PTU at the expense of existing church programs. Although PTU will generate some revenue, there is a significant amount of “investment” capital needed to develop, promote and implement this comprehensive program. The reallocation of needed resources taken from existing ministry operating expenses could affect employee issues and future capital expenditures.

Designing Biblical Education for Practical Use

Much of what has been discussed in the previous chapter, especially chapter one, speaks to the dismal picture of Christian education within the local church. In stating the problem, I have made the case of the impractical way in which spiritual information is learned within the local church context. Notwithstanding the fact that Biblical subjects are unlike any other due to their divine nature of the material, for the sake of strict pedagogy, all academic disciplines are learned in the same way. Thus, the arguably poor educational attainment and comprehension among present learners broadens our discussion beyond Biblical truths, but are still inclusive of them.

When one considers the applied sciences such as mathematics and physics, there is an expectation that to achieve proficiency in these areas, the students must have a mastery of the basic concepts, especially those who hail from MIT and John Hopkins. In Howard Gardner's book, *The Disciplined Mind*, he states:

These students perform credibly in classroom exercises and end-of term tests. But consider what happens outside class, when they are asked to explain relatively simple phenomena, such as the forces operating on a tossed curved tube. Not only do a significant proportion of students (often more than half) fail to give the appropriate explanation; even worse, they tend to give the same kind of answers as peers and younger children who have never studied mechanics. Despite years of schooling, the minds of these college students remain fundamentally unschooled.¹²²

Gardner's review of the educational system is a salient point regarding learning even in the church context. What believers seem to learn in church is not often applied to every day life. Gardner would submit that it is because the "student" has not been adequately prepared to do so. He further inserts that the "chief obstacle to understanding stems from

¹²² Howard Gardner, *The Disciplined Mind*,: (New York, Penguin Group, 2000) 120.

the theories children develop in early in life.¹²³ Biblical education, through the process of ‘metanoia’ requires a new way of thinking; the renewal of the old which allows for a different, albeit superior wisdom. This metamorphous is not automatic or organic and is further complicated by deeply ingrained “misconceptions which arise early in life and why, absent aggressive interventions, they prove so resistant to change.”¹²⁴ A limitation of the PTU is that it does not intentionally identify those ‘misconceptions’. I agree with Gardner’s perspective, “One must identify those internal representations in need of alteration; construct cultural practices that confront, rather than overlook, the obstacles to deeper understanding; and devise measures to determine whether the ‘corrective cognitive surgery’ has been effective.”¹²⁵

The acquisition of facts or more specifically, biblical information is not the same as possessing biblical understanding. Understanding in this sense implies a working knowledge of how something functions rather than the regurgitation of information. Gardner presents four approaches to understanding that serve to inform to some degree how to proceed in effective ‘cognitive surgery’ in the context of a PTU in the local church community. As a further play on Gardner’s metaphor, PTU represents the operating room in which this surgery is performed.

¹²³ Ibid., 121.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 123.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

Gardner's Approaches to Understanding

Approach 1: *Learning from Suggestive Institutions* – A Suggestive Institution, like an “apprenticeship, a harbor instructive clues.”¹²⁶ Any environment in which the student has an opportunity to have hands-on experience with the theoretical knowledge may fit into approach 1.

Approach 2: *Direct Confrontation of Erroneous Conceptions* – in this approach students are confronted with how their “current conceptions are inadequate.”¹²⁷

Approach 3: *Framework That Facilitates Understanding* – Gardner suggests that students, ought to be exposed from the start to examples of understanding, and should be given ample opportunities to practice and perform their own understandings.”¹²⁸

Approach 4: *Multiple Entry Points to Understanding* – this approach values the fact that “individuals possess different kinds of minds, featuring different blends of mental representations.”¹²⁹

Each of the four approaches Gardner presents has a corresponding relationship to the PTU philosophy of education.

PTU and Approach 1 – one potential Suggestive Learning Institution is the discipleship mandate which is a vital part of any believer's growth process. The Lord Jesus demonstrated to His disciples what was expected of them in terms of ministry. PTU

¹²⁶ Ibid., 126

¹²⁷ Ibid., 127

¹²⁸ Ibid., 128.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 133.

offers hands-on practical exploration of concepts taught in class. Each student, as part of their learning experience, is required to work closely with an accountability partner and small groups.

PTU and Approach 2 – another aspect of discipleship is ‘Direct Confrontation of Erroneous Concepts’. The Head of the Church often corrected His disciples regarding wrong motivations and theologies. The idea of PTU is to uproot wrong or misguided thoughts injected by the world system of thinking.

PTU and Approach 3 - Framework That Facilitates Understanding is the classroom setting and the assignments given as part of the PTU curriculum. The PTU program relies very heavily on each student feeling comfortable enough with the knowledge to apply it in their every day experience.

PTU and Approach 4 - Multiple Entry Points to Understanding takes into consideration various learning styles and historical factors that shape PTU students mental models. PTU approaches this opportunity by providing assessment tools for each student to understand their personality traits and learning styles.

One of the unique factors of this particular Doctoral program, Ministry in Complex Urban Settings, is the emphasis on theological understanding within the understood ministry context and the interrelatedness between all the moving parts. The potential implications and impact of establishing a new learning system in an already functioning church have, in part, been chronicled by the Hexagon Technique and Causal

Loop diagrams. However there are anecdotal reflections that are also helpful in understanding the overall effect of PTU on the Cathedral of Life.

The introduction of a new program is often met with a basic level of apprehension of the “implementers” and enthusiasm by the direct beneficiaries. My administrative team and pastoral staff, totaling five full-time employees approached this new assignment with the dutiful faithfulness I have come to expect and value. The team assumed the myriad of PTU responsibilities into their already over-scheduled work orders. As with all Cathedral programs, ministries, outreaches and events, PTU functioned esthetically without a hitch. As the Senior Visionary of the group, I viewed my most important contribution to the organization as seeing the future and developing of innovative programs and strategies to usher in the *Shalom* of the city. Whereas this approach seems to work at first glance, deeper probing revealed a different story.

The deeper probing to which I am referring are the intended and unintended consequences brought to the service through Hexagoning. I was once referred to by Dr. Doug and Judy Hall as being a “systems actor” rather than a “systems thinker”. At the time, early into the second residency of this program, I did not fully understand what was meant by their comment. However, I have come to realize that the difference between a systems actor and system thinker is that an actor forces a particular behavior, whereas a systems thinker is one who has become so immersed in a new mental model that he unconsciously responds with system thoughts and movements.

I realized during the Hexagon exercises that the involvement of members of the team is indispensable to the healthy creation and implementation of any new program. The four hour session allowed the key stakeholders an opportunity to better understand

the ‘vision’ as well as play a meaningful role in how, when and ‘if’ the program was launched. The multiplicity of potential problems that were brought to the surface as a result of “dialogue” has proven to be invaluable. It has slowed the “coming on line” of other programs. It also provided more light on my paternalistic and hierarchal leadership style which has limited the full value and integration of team work.

Through this process as an organization, we are becoming a learning organization. We are undergoing a corporate *metanoia* that promises to impact the entirety of how we do what we do. As the Senior Pastor and Chief Empowerment Officer, the shifting of my mind from the nobility of servant leadership to include principles of a vibrant learning organization will have a radical impact. The ability as a ministry to influence more lives exponentially increases as we combine our thoughts, energies and insights to this project, PTU, and future endeavors.

Implications of Christian Education for Church Relationships

One of the stated objectives of the PTU concept was the potential for engaging students outside the immediate Christian community and to other congregations. The curriculum being developed, for all intent and purpose, is non-denominational. There is no intentional “Cathedral” church doctrine being espoused, but rather principles that could be seen as generally accepted by those within the Protestant community. This then allows, in theory, the inclusion of church members from a wide range of denominations. Although, it is understood that in all Biblical teaching there is a doctrinal slant, however slight it may be, the intention is to provide basic principles upon which a solid biblical foundation could be established. There are several benefits to this idea:

1. Bridge building between churches, religious traditions and neighborhoods,
2. An organic opportunity for fellowship among believers,
3. Shared teaching load among pastors,
4. Combining physical resources, such as meeting space, administration cost,
5. A witness of unity to the local community
6. Fostered relationship between pastors and leaders

The idealism of this programs ability to foster unity does not mask the many potential obstacles that are inherent in team building. Such obstacles can include the lack of prior relationship between church leaders which can lead to suspicion regarding motivation for wanting to work together, as well as different teaching and cultural styles. Another potential challenge is curriculum and doctrinal preferences. Perhaps the most significant concern among particular church leaders is the worry over losing members through this process of spiritual cross-pollination.

Urban Leadership Development

Over the last twenty years, there has been a new emphasis on organizational leadership. From corporate America to the buzz around ‘servant leadership’ models prevalent within progressive non-profits, leadership has gained a new place in the discussion of renewal and revival.

Leadership means different things to different people. One way that I have come to define ‘leadership’ is the ability to influence others. A middle school student, who has the ability to motivate his peers in a particular direction, even if it is negative, is a leader, for example. “Urban”, at first pass, does mean something other than rural or suburban. The word urban and city are actually used interchangeably. But when urban or ‘city’ is

discussed in a serious way, it becomes more difficult to clearly define. Conn and Ortiz write, “Scholarship devoted to the city has yet to find a commonly accepted definition of either a city or the city.”¹³⁰ Notwithstanding, in 1938, sociologist, Louis Wirth produced a classic that is still debated today, “the city... perceived as heterogeneous, a place of specialization and diversity.”¹³¹

The need for a new leadership paradigm is evident in every segment of our community and country; leadership that causes forward movement and inspires us to be our best. In a church context, especially within the urban environment, leadership is paramount. However, it could hardly be debated that a new leadership is not necessary to meet the intricate and comprehensive problems that permeate our lives today. This ‘new leadership’ is not in a person. The leadership that will shape the future is a leadership that is shared by the majority. Again, using the sophomoric understanding of leadership to mean the ‘ability to influence another’, potential leaders or influencers are found in every seat in our congregations each weekend. Therefore, our challenge is two-fold: first, announce the new philosophy of ‘every member leadership’; second, to prepare the leader-elects for their new roles as urban leaders.

The thesis of this project is based principally on the need for the development of a new breed urban leadership through personal transformation. As mentioned previously, leadership training, leadership seminars, leadership institutes are in abundance. But little attention is given to leadership development in the urban context and from a spiritual perspective. Thus the task at hand is to address the qualities necessary to be a leader in an urban environment. More specifically, what is the process for developing urban leaders in

¹³⁰ Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz. *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City & the People of God*. (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001). 157.

¹³¹ Ibid., 159.

an overtly Christian context? Secondly, what are the characteristics of a local church that fosters the growth of urban leaders?

The Process

The term process implies time and effort; leadership development is no exception. Mentoring is an indispensable part of developing leaders to work in the urban climate. The advancement of any program beyond the first generation is directly related to the leaders' ability to educate and matures others to carry the vision forward. As discussed in previous chapters, understanding the context in which an activity is to be conducted is crucial to appreciating its complexity. Mentoring in urban settings is similar. Mentoring a young athlete or a teenager for example, regarding her school performance is remarkably different then mentoring an adult for urban ministry in an urban setting. Even though some of the qualifications outlined below could be applied to mentoring in general, there are specifics that pertain almost exclusively to urban leadership development.

Qualifications of a Mentor of Urban Leaders

Conan and Ortiz, indicate several qualifications for mentoring urban leaders that will serve as a starting point and in inform the long-range objective of the PTU.

Identifying qualified mentors is the first brick in building an urban leadership development system.

1) *The mentor must first of all be devoted to Christ and thus to personal holiness.*¹³²

This objective should be beyond the growth or propagation of a particular doctrine or ministry. The highest goal, as articulated in scripture and reaffirmed by Conn and Ortiz is

¹³² Ibid., 434.

to be “conformed to the image of Christ.”¹³³ The challenge then becomes, as a mentor, to keep the highest goal in mind.

2) *The mentor must be mentored.*¹³⁴ This particular qualification speaks to the need for the continual learning of a teacher. Senge references this as a learning organization.

Although mentoring one-on-one, in a strictest sense does not qualify as an “organization”, the point is nevertheless valid. Any serious minded mentor is duty bound to stay current regarding techniques, best practices, methodology and any other pertinent information that would increase their ability to prepare their mentee for success in their chosen field.

3) *The mentor must be passionate about the advancement of the Gospel.*¹³⁵

The obvious point of this qualification is the continuation of the commission given to the church. Mentoring for ‘mentoring’ sake within urban ministry, but forgetting the ultimate objective of the ministry would be a major mistake.

4) *The mentor must be active in service.*¹³⁶

The mentor needs to be involved in serving that is modeling behavior which he or she would hope is emulated by the mentee.

¹³³ Rom. 8:29. NAs

¹³⁴ Ibid., 435.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 436.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 436.

5) *The mentor must be deeply committed to those he or she is mentoring.*¹³⁷

The mentor shows through action, words and example their commitment to the mentee and the process. Mentoring takes time. Mentors must be willing to commit the resources time, energy and knowledge to the development of the charge in their care.

6) *The mentor is committed to the duration of the race.*¹³⁸

A willingness to “stick it out” with the mentee is an important distinction between a mentor who will be successful and one who will not.

7) *The mentor must be well theologically prepared.*¹³⁹

This area is of the utmost importance. Because urban ministry is a subset of theology proper, it is necessary that the mentor possess a working knowledge of theology, exegetical and hermeneutical skills in order to transfer the same to the mentee.

8) *The mentor must be sociology and anthropologically prepared.*¹⁴⁰

Similarly, in addition to being theologically prepared, the mentor also must see the relationship between sociology and anthropology and their contextual relationship to urban theology.

9) *The Mentor must be flexible.*¹⁴¹ The ability to work with the fluidity of human relationships is a requirement when working with disciples. From personality types, schedules, personal histories, educational and theological limitations, are just a few of the factors which make it necessary to remain flexible in this type of relationship.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 436.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 436.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 436.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 437.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 438.

Mentoring Process

Conn and Ortiz go into great depth regarding the actual mentoring process. They have summarized the process into three levels – Building a Relationship, Learning Experience, and the Examination. The overlap of these levels is necessary, especially in light of systemic thinking.

Building a Relationship – Level one:

Relationships flourish based on several factors. The mentor and mentee relationship is predicated on an informal relationship. Rapport development is a time intensive endeavor. Conn and Ortiz assert that this first level is satisfied through mutuality, holism and friendship.¹⁴² Mentoring thus, involves much more than information sharing.

- Mutuality - Contact, on a personal basis, is a necessary ingredient to building a solid relationship for mentoring purposes. The act of sharing their lives fosters a mutually satisfying relationship.
- Holism – the mentor and mentee relationship becomes stronger as each participant communicates the totality of their lives.
- Friendship – the deeper aspect within this first level is friendship. The mentor must be willing to enter into the life of the mentee in order for there to be a meaningful relationship. Friendships, like a garden must be cultivated and strengthen over time.

¹⁴² Ibid., 439.

The Learning Experience- Level Two:

The second level of the mentoring process involves experience learning. The learning experience has five phases: modeling, supervising and teaching, observing and sending.

- Modeling – mentors are required to re – present the work for which the mentee is being prepared. We all learn by seeing. In the context of this type of relationship, the life of the mentor must be on display, intentionally, for the mentee to learn from. This encompasses both his and her ministry and personal life as well.
- Supervision – This period of the relationship is designed to give the mentee an opportunity, under the careful watch of the mentor to demonstrate proficiency.
- Teaching - The mentor enters into a teacher-mentor relationship in order to guide the mentee in the learning process. The mentor teaches topics that pertain not only in traditional ministerial subjects, but also with regard to the mentee's family, community and self.¹⁴³
- Observing Others – Part of the learning process is providing opportunity for the mentee to experience other ministries and settings. This includes, beyond what they have experienced in their immediate community.¹⁴⁴
- Sending – This is the opportunity for the mentee to begin ministry on his or her own. The sending phase marks the formal end of the learning process, but not the end of the relationship with the mentor.

Examination – Level Three:

In level three, the responsibility moves toward the mentee. The mentor acts as evaluator of the progress of the mentee. Feedback is an essential element in the mentoring process.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 448.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 449.

This allows both the mentor and mentee the opportunity to take an objective look at their collective journey toward being fully equipped for urban ministry.

Characteristics of Mentoring Ministry

To intentionally develop urban leaders, requires an environment which cultivates and encourages leaders to think contextually. Although ministry is often defined in general terms as serving others, it is often displayed on the backdrop of a particular environment. This environment is many times urban in nature and experience. Consequently, it takes a particular leadership model and or a church culture, to produce contextually relevant leaders to care for those in the cities of this nation and across the world. Barna and Jackson, in their work, *High Impact African American Churches*, share key aspects of ministries which are mentoring by design. These seven points reveal the intentionality demanded for urban leadership development on purpose and organically.

1) Leadership for Discipleship - Everything rises and falls on leadership. In the case of urban leadership, this axiom stands unchallenged. The starting point in the creation of an urban leadership “greenhouse” is with the present leadership paradigm. The mental model which must be embraced by the core leadership is one in which discipleship is paramount. The leaders within the organization should have a desire and ability to provide on-going learning opportunities that encourage members to increase their working knowledge of Biblical principles. Leadership is crucial to this end, for “a congregation cannot go where its leaders refuse to take it (them).”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Barna, *High Impact*, 75.

- 2) Clear Discipleship Philosophy – Effective ministries that develop leaders are those that have a clear, articulated vision for discipleship; vision that includes a strategic plan and a succinct description of relevant subjects; assignments of responsibilities in the maturation process; specifics ways of measuring progress toward discipleship.¹⁴⁶
- 3) Blending Evangelism and Discipleship – Evangelism and discipleship, although technically different, are two-sides of the same coin. Effective urban churches recognize the relationship between the two and seek ways to create a seamless avenue from conversion, which occurs in evangelism and transformation which is a result of discipleship.¹⁴⁷
- 4) Providing Practical Theology – Ministries that meet the needs of congregants are seen as those who take the “timeless theological principles” revealed in the sacred text and present them in ways which are applicable to the present context of the hearer.
- 5) Offering Many Means of Growing – Churches that are nurturing are those that provide multiple avenues for members to receive instruction in the ‘ways of God’. The traditional service opportunities, mid-week bible study and Sunday morning worship services do meet certain needs. On the other hand, the most effective churches provide a litany of growth opportunities. People want to choose from a menu that allows them to tailor a spiritual agenda that meets their multifaceted needs.¹⁴⁸
- 6) Faith without Works is Dead – Ministries that stimulate other’s spiritual growth combines faith and corresponding actions. The movement of a believer through the discipleship grid is enhanced as he or she sees that action is a product of ethics. Ethics, which are informed by practical theology yield corresponding actions by default. “It is

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 77.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 78.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 81.

the desire and willingness to serve those in need, without hesitation, which show as the person understands the gift of his or her salvation.¹⁴⁹

7) Spiritual Substance – The content of the material presented must contain depth and practicality. Identifying the unique needs of the people is a hallmark of successful ministry. Churches that “remain sensitive to the needs and concerns of their constituency and respond with real-world counsel and Kingdom wisdom” are valued by more people.¹⁵⁰

Mentoring is a contemporary colloquialism to describe, at least to some degree, the Biblical discipleship process. Qualified mentors, who understand the mentor-mentee relationship and are committed to the work of mentoring, are important elements in developing an urban leadership movement. An environment or church culture that stimulates urban leadership development embraces certain principles and practices elucidate earlier as a matter of course. Programs which only provide conference or seminar-like learning opportunities fail in producing effective urban leaders. The goal of discipleship, in the urban context, is to equip women and men to serve the native populations in cultural astute manner, with an operational knowledge of the multiplicity and complexity of the issues which are indigenous to city life; issues which any relevant urban-based ministry must face.

Recommendations for Further Study

This thesis-project, with the aforementioned limitations naturally has many aspects which could benefit from additional research and study. There are several

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 83.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 84

interrogatives that were raised as a result to the research design and implementation. For instance: 1) How does the cultural differences of the PTU students impact the learning environment? Comprehension? 2) In what ways can inter-church relationships be strengthened to allow for greater participation? 3) How can the building of 'inter-church relationships' result in the evangelization of the larger community? 4) How do educational backgrounds of the participants affect enrollment levels? 5) What classes could serve students with learning disabilities? 6) Others areas that could serve to enhance this paper involve further analysis of adult learning styles. 7) Additional research could involve ways to outreach to other churches and community groups. Surveys of church groups and community residents regarding the topics of interest would be helpful in accomplishing this objective.

Addressing the above referenced questions in depth would bolster the findings contained in this project. These questions are not extraneous, but were beyond the scope of this project.

Appendix 1



Practical Truth University (PTU)
Spring Session: March 25-May30, 2007

College of Spiritual Health

101: Introduction to Prayer and Faith

The foundation of a meaningful spiritual life is developed through Word-based prayer. This course teaches the discipline of prayer and the necessity of faith to grow in your walk with Christ. **Classes will meet on Wednesdays 7-8:30pm**

201: Biblical Reading for Transformation

Do have a hunger to learn the ways of God? One way to do this is to become a disciplined learner of His Word. Students in this class will learn to search the scriptures for biblical truth and understanding; and then learn to apply the word of God leading to spiritual transformation. **Classes will meet on Tuesdays 7:00-8:30pm**

College of Wealth Creation

101: Introduction to Biblical Financial Principles

This class will examine the basics of personal finance and how to get your financial house in order. Learn and go through the first steps in becoming debt-free. **Classes will meet on Wednesdays at 7:00-8:30pm**

College of Family Life

101: From Marriage to Covenant relationship

Come and learn what it means to have a marital covenant relationship. Participants will explore topics in communication and love through group discussions and practical exercises. For married couples only! **Classes will meet on Tuesdays 7:00-9:00pm**

301: How to Build a Family Alter

This class will demonstrate the benefits of establishing spiritual routine for the family. Learn how to pray together, talk together, and believe God together for a stronger relationship with each other and with Him. **Classes will meet on Thursdays 7:00-8:30pm**

College of Health and Healing

101: Healthy Lifestyles

This is an opportunity to become a 'holistic' disciple by connecting your spiritual life and your physical health. This course will assist you in developing and understanding God's way for health and healing.

Classes will meet on Wednesdays 7:00-8:30pm

College of Professional & Personal Development

201: Understanding Your Divine Purpose

Do you dream of doing something Great? Explore your life's purpose and how to focus your time and activities toward reaching it. Learn how to set goals and use the faith God has given you to reach them. **Classes**

will meet on Thursdays 7:00-8:30pm

Appendix 2



Attendance Roster

Practical Truth University (PTU) ***"Teaching Living Principles"***

Class: Biblical Reading for Transformation

	<u>Name</u>	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	<u>Notes</u>
1	Marcus								
2	Cicely								
3	Toni								
4	Javier								
5	Shareese								
6	Donna								
7	Victoria								
8	Susan								
9	Douglas								
10	Nicole								
11	Rufus								
12	Sheila								
13	Alisa								
14	Brianna								
15	Victor								
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									

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As the Senior Pastor and Founder of the Cathedral of Life Christian Assembly, in Providence Rhode Island, Reverend Williams has grown the Cathedral from a congregation of nine just seven short years ago to over one thousand members. Driven by the God-given mandate to “Empower Others to Change Their World”, he has focused the ministries of the Cathedral on three guiding principles: community empowerment, economic prosperity, and the pursuit of spiritual victory.

Under the direction and leadership of Reverend Williams, the lives of many have been changed. The Cathedral of Life has responded to the needs of its community both locally and nationally. With over 40 ministries and outreaches in operation, the ministry is both holistic and comprehensive.

Reverend Williams has delivered the biblical teachings of spiritual love, courage, faith and healing to audiences both nationally and internationally. He enjoys reading, martial arts, playing golf, antiquing, and most of all, raising his two beautiful daughters, Grace Noelle (11) and Joy Victoria (13). He is a D. Min candidate at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, scheduled to graduate in May 2007.